Yu-Gi-Oh Time Loops

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They all share two things. They all have strange hair and they all are stuck doing things over and over again. Time Loop stories for Yu-gi-oh, GX, 5D's and Zexal.

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Chapter 1

Authors Note: Yugioh is owned by Kazuki Takahashi.

Any written work with a name in brackets was written by that contributor. Otherwise I wrote it.

1.1 :

Yugi blinked as he felt his body move, sliding in the last piece of the puzzle. Here he is, back again. Solving the Millennium Puzzle again. Having to bond with Joey and the others again.

He had become sick and tired of repeating time over and over again. Every time only two sets of memories seemed to come back. His... and Atem's. He grinned as his partner connected once more.

'So, what's the plan this time Yugi?' Atem asked. The fact that both of them had lived much longer than any man has had to live before had meant the two were about as tight as friends could be, a mental link being second nature to them.

Yugi just grinned as he walked around the room. 'Simple one. After seeing how Joey did against Marik... I'm thinking Joey Wheeler: King of Games,' He noted.

'Interesting. It will be hard to get him to defeat Pegasus, but not entirely impossible,' Atem conceded... and then noticed the look on Yugi's face. 'But you think otherwise?'

Yugi sighed. "Don't get me wrong Atem, it's not like I can't see Joey winning... but remember that at the time the rules are Pegasus's and we were only able to survive through mind shuffle.'

The two fell silent... and then Atem grinned. 'I might just have a solution to that.'

Pegasus grinned. It was a shame that he didn't get to face Yugi-boy in the finals so he could beat him and claim the puzzle, but it seems he had given his friend the puzzle to use instead. It wouldn't be as fun, but it would still get him back his Cecilia. He almost felt sorry for poor Joey-boy here. He had potential but the rigors of a Shadow Game were already straining him. 'And now to see what exactly your next card will be.' Pegasus's Millennium Eye glowed in the darkness. He gazed into Joey's mind and saw... a Kurboh?

"Kuri". The brown fuzzball cheeped. And with that cheep as his only warning the Kuriboh started multiplying rapidly. And then they started to dance, or at least moving in what could be called dancing, shaking back and forth. Pegasus glared and the glow intensified as he attempted to banish these annoying pests... only for them to multiply faster and faster, starting to fill up the field. He stopped using the eye but by this point it seemed too late as an ocean of Kuriboh formed. As a tidal wave of the cute fiends broke over his platform, Pegasus spotted what must be the Puzzle's spirit... surfing on the annoying creatures.

"Penalty game!" The spirit declared. The wave crashed down on Pegasus. It engulfed him in Kuriboh.

Even many months later Joey would never tell a soul on just exactly how he beat Pegasus. It didn't help that every time he brought up the subject Yugi doubled over in hysterical laughter.

Jaden sighed. Jinzo. Jinzo was always a duel that brings a downer to things. It made death seem so near when really the burn strategy he had is subpar at best. And at times an excuse to say the word "Ectoplasma" as much as possible.

"Ok dude, I get that you're a monster spirit that wants to be in the real world," Jaden stated. His turn had started but he hadn't drawn yet. Opposite to him was the possessed Obelisk Blue boy... Tory?

Torrey? It's embarrassing that despite the loops, he let himself forget the guy's name. "But seriously? Taking people's souls?"

"What other option do you think I have?" Jinzo countered.

"Mystical items!" Jaden shouted. "I mean, Yugi Motou's own Millennium puzzle is said to have magic in it, couldn't that sustain you?" He asked.

Jinzo laughed. It started off as a deep mechanical rumble, but evolved into full on bellows of cruel laughter. "So naive. I'm only doing this right now because of the magic. I could use it and become solid... but then where's the fun in all that?"

"So you're torturing then and taking their souls for fun then?" Jaden asked. His hand clenched into a fist... and then relaxed. "Right, just thought I'd check."

"Why?"

"Because I won't feel so bad doing this!" Jaden declared... and as he did, a dark aura of energy surrounded him. His eyes turned yellow as he glared at the duel spirit. The currently panicking duel spirit.

"No. You can't be him," Jinzo denied. Jaden drew the cards from his deck even as the possessed body sweated. "You can't be. You're just a myth!"

"Uh Jaden... what's he talking about?" Syrus asked. Ah Syrus. He might not be looping like Yubel tends to do but he's one of the most loyal friends regardless, and one of the first to believe him if he says who he is. "What's going on?"

Jaden looked at his hand... and then raised his duel disk and gave his friend a thumbs up. "Don't worry Sy. I'm just teaching this guy a lesson". He stated as his voice echoed slightly.

The rest of the duel was short and bloody. Yes it was excessive to bring out the Supreme King against Jinzo... but it was honestly worth it to see Jinzo starting to scream like a little girl. "Sometimes there's no kill like overkill."

1.3 (Krika):

Yusei sighed as he tuned up his second Duel Runner yet again. Repeating these events had been...uncertain at first. He had first thought this was some trick of Z-ONEs, but repetition had drilled that idea out. Still, he had the opportunity to redo some of the best times in his life (and some of the worst - he shoved memories of Kalin out of his head).

He didn't seem to start the loops early enough to stop Rally from stealing the chip (and it wasn't like he needed that particular one anyway, with the engineering experience he had accumulated), but he could at least make sure that Trudge didn't arrest him.

Seriously, Trudge was pretty asshole-ish before he got to know Martha and Crow's kids. Hopefully he could speed that up a little later on down the line, but for now, he felt like letting loose. While he'd have to assemble a lot of his cards from scratch, his abilities seemed to carry over, including one in particular...

Two motorbikes sped around a corner, the one in the lead flashing with the colors of Security, the one behind a sleek red. A massive dragon accompanied the first, while two small-ish warriors, a tiny one in a race-car outfit and a robot-like one with a scarf around its neck followed the second.

"You wasted your entire turn and your hand to summon a measly level 2 Synchro monster, and leaving it in Attack Position? If you aren't going to give me a challenge, Satellite Scum, at least do me the favor of giving up now!" He chuckled, and glanced back to find the duellist giving him a very rude gesture. "Why you..! Montage

Dragon, destroy him!" The three-headed dragon roared, and shot at the unprotected race-car warrior.

"Now you'll be sorry..." he chuckled, when a brilliant glow erupted behind him. "Wha..." He looked over his shoulder to find Yusei not only surrounded in a brilliant blue glow, but accelerating past him. As the opposing duellist shot by him, he somehow managed to pick out that Yusei was somehow piloting his Runner with his eyes closed. Once passed him, he heard the cry of "CLEAR MIND! ACCEL..." before the bike impossibly disappeared in a flash of light.

"Wait, where did you go?" He checked around in confusion, before another burst of light heralded both the reappearance of the Duel Runner, bearing a widely grinning duellist, and a massive monster in the space where two had been before.

"...SYNCHRO!"

Trudge gulped. Maybe this bet hadn't been the best idea...

1.4:

Yuma simply grinned as he faced Shark. Usually things were so boring when it was only him and Astral, even at this point in time he can pull off Chaos Number 39: Utopia Ray. A card which pretty much demolishes anyone at this point. And after he duels Kite in the key, well then he has access to every single card he and Astral have made through Shining Draw. And while it is amusing to see Vetrix and Faker completely freak out at the idea of not only facing advanced cards, but ones that use the powers of Rank Up and Rank Down magic... it's not a challenge.

Not this time though. It's the bay, and he and Shark are duelling. He had Spear Sharks, Hammer Shark and Big Jaws on the field, with all their levels at level 4. Given the grin on Shark's face he wasn't entirely blind to what he was doing either. "Hey Yuma. You're going to need to drop that no Numbers policy, because I'm opening the

overlay network!" He declared, the three water monsters flooding their way into the galaxy esque portal. "With these three, I open the overlay network and xyz summon," Shark continued.

"Three level 4 monsters," Yuma muttered.

"And it's Shark. I am unsure as to how he managed to get it from Vetrix, but there's only one monster that fits," Astral noted.

"Prepare for this battle to get torrential," Shark added. "Number 32: Shark Drake!" As he declared it, the red shark Number monster surged its way out of the portal and growled at Yuma. But no number started glowing on the water duellist.

Yuma blinked... then grinned. "How long were you going to wait until you told me you were doing this?" He asked.

Shark smirked. "I was hoping to fool you a bit more, but you aren't making mistakes I can use this time," Shark said.

"Uh, can somebody fill us in on what's going on?" Bronk asked.

"It's... a little complicated," Yuma admitted.

"No, it's just you're too thick to make it sound simple," Shark stated.

"You try to explain the concept of time loops to people who've only just encountered Number cards! The only one I can get to reliably accept it is Caswell," Yuma shouted.

Bronk and Tori turned to Caswell, the hefty boy and green haired girl utterly confused. "Um... he hasn't told me anything like that." The blue haired boy admitted. "But the concept is popular in the fiction where someone repeats the same events over and over in a never ending loop. When they get to an end, they get back." As he chatted, Yuma and Shark had continued their duel, the red shark on the field having been replaced by a bigger white shark and guitar playing fiend that seems to be trying to defeat it with the power of music.

"But if Yuma was in one of those... then it would mean that in the end he's been reliving events like this one over and over again". He notes in awe, the three glancing back as, against all odds, the white shark collapsed from the fiend playing it's guitar. "Although one has to ask if his strategy is always the same".

"Nah, too boring then," Yuma shouted back. "If I always duelled the same then I wouldn't be able to be feeling the flow!" His three friends just blinked... and laughed. Shark soon joined in as Yuma looked around, confused. "Hey, why is everyone laughing?"

"Oh man, even if he is repeating things, that's still Yuma," Bronk managed to laugh out.

1.5 (Krika):

Crow looked at the group assembled in front of him, and steepled his fingers in mock seriousness.

"Alright, let's go over this one more time. The Shadow Realm is apparently the underlying source of all Games of Darkness. You can bring it into this world, correct?"

Yugi shook his head. "If we don't want to start an actual Shadow Game, then I could at most intensify the influence and power of pretty much anything that draws on it."

Crow nodded in understanding, then turned to look at two figures, one green-haired in a red and pink outfit, the other with a shock of brown hair in a worn red jacket."You two can lever open portals to the Spirit World, and summon Duel Monster Spirits, yes?"

Luna nodded, while Jaden smiled excitedly. "You make it sound so difficult, Crow. Two of my titles do directly relate to dealing with Spirits, after all." He snapped his fingers, and Winged Kuriboh popped into existence on his head. "We can do it just fine."

Crow nodded, and glanced at a redhead in a somewhat anachronistic-looking dress. "And I know that you can bring holograms to real life." Akiza nodded in acknowledgement.

He turned to the last member of the group, and looked the boy with two-toned hair over. "And….I'm going to be honest, I don't quite get what you can do, but it's impressive, and that's pretty much what I'm looking for."

Yuma grinned. "I've got a good feeling about this, and now that I'm feeling the flow, I'm not going back!" Crow nodded, and turned away from the group to face the rising sun, in a surprisingly dramatic gesture. Probably practiced.

"Then….let us begin."

Where New Domino City had been was now a massive battlefield. Duel Spirits were constantly emerging from tears in the air, and clashing against each other, the great wars and rivalries spilling over into this plane. In various places around what was left of the city, the massive flaming glyphs of the Earthbound immortals were emblazoned on the ground and the sky. The giants fought against the rising tide of Spirits, smashing dozens with each blow. Other gods were there as well, fighting the tide and each other. The legendary Egyptian Gods smashed against their Wicked counterparts, the air trembling with the clash. The Nordic Gods fought all comers, desperately trying to stave off Ragnarok. Around the edges, the Sacred Beasts, long since combined into Armityle, flitted around the edges, taking bites out of anything that presented itself.

As humans struggled to discover what was going on, Duelists found that monsters they summoned were real, and capable of inflicting real damage. Duel Gangs went on the run, as Security tried to keep what little was left of the situation under control. Some banded together, using their decks to defend the helpless against the rising tide of horror. On their side was another god, a weak one, but Zushin

protected the small. Still, despite this hope, another force lurked in the shadows. More and more, duellists would find a card on the ground, a card that they were compelled to pick up. To those who did, they found themselves possessed, and began to spread chaos across the city, with glowing Numbers signifying those lost to this power. They broke into the safe zones, merging them with the chaos that filled the city.

In the sky above, as if a harbinger of destruction, the Divine Temple hung. From it a buzz sounded, a buzz that grew stronger as machines emerged from it, destroying all that they reached. Their armies focused on the Momentum infrastructure of the city, attempting to level the city as they prepared the way for the slowly descending Temple.

One building remained intact, protected by 6 dragons that surrounded it, glowing with the red energy of the Crimson Dragon. On top of it, Yusei stared at the hell that his home had been reduced to, and then turned to look at the perpetrators. Yugi's spikier-than-normal hair indicated that the Pharaoh was in control, while Jaden's eyes glowed with the powers of the Supreme King and Yubel. Luna and Akiza looked normal, though like the rest of the Signers their marks glowed bright red. Yuma….no-one was still sure what Yuma had done, why his hair was now trichromatic, or where he had gotten the armor from.

"And what do you have to say for yourselves?" He glared at them with a hint of the rage that very few people had ever seen in his eyes. Luna shivered a little, but everyone present had faced off against some of the more terrifying things the multiverse could offer, and weren't immediately cowed, though Luna and Akiza were worried that maybe they had hit the normally level-headed Yusei's breaking point.

In response to the question, Crow shrugged. "Well, that escalated quickly."

1.5 Addition:

And darting between each battle, cackling at all the chaos as he flew upon his wings was Number 96: Dark Mist, influenced by the demonic power. Occasionally a monster would charge at him, or a blast of energy fired up but he'd either absorb the poor fool and fire back or simply dodge it. In fact the absorbed strength he's gathered so far has allowed him to shrug off the occasional blast from one of the more godly monsters. "Yes you fools, squabble, battle in all this chaos! Such destruction, such mayhem... it is glorious!" Dark Mist laughed. "And at the end, who will stand but-"

He didn't even get enough time to finish that sentence as a golden sword impaled him, followed by a blast of godly lightning and Zushin's fist. As it ends up, while flying might be fun, flying and ranting make you an obvious target in this area.

1.6 (The Imaginatrix):

"Sirs must be very careful. Very bad if fall into any springs!"

"This guy is already annoying me," Kaiba muttered. He had only been awake for a few loops, and he'd ended up here. To make matters worse, Yugi and the mutt were here with him. According to his loop memories, they'd all accompanied someone called "Ranma" to this valley full of supposedly cursed springs. Not that he believed that. It had taken him years to acknowledge the existence of Shadow Magic, and nearly two loops to admit it. He'd believe these springs were cursed when he saw—

Yugi slipped and fell into one of the nearest pools with a startled yelp.

"Oh dear! Sir fall in Spring of Drowned Egyptian Pharaoh! Very tragic story of young pharaoh who drown there over three-thousand year ago."

Yugi re-emerged several inches taller with a deep tan.

"Thank the gods! I've been trying to switch out since we got here—wait. Why is everyone staring?"

"Sir is taking curse very well," the guide observed.

Kaiba rolled his eyes. "He does this all the time. The fact that you guessed what would happen is a fluke."

"Kaiba, he doesn't get a tan when the Pharaoh takes control," Joey said in a whisper.

Kaiba ignored him. "Anyway, how could an Egyptian pharaoh drown in the middle of China? That makes no sense."

Before Kaiba could continue, a somewhat frantic panda ran into him from behind, and he was sent tumbling into another nearby spring.

"Sir fall into Spring of Drowned Female White Dragon! Very tragic story of white dragon who drown here two-thousand five-hundred year ago!"

Joey stared as a majestic creature he had only ever seen as a hologram rose out of the water, and didn't notice the red-haired girl running his way with rage in her eyes until she slammed into him, and he fell into the Spring of Drowned Golden Retriever.

"Sorry about that," Ranma said sheepishly once the story had been told and the Tendo sisters had left the four of them alone. The girls were not Awake this loop, and Ranma hadn't officially Awoken until they all arrived in Nerima. Joey was looking particularly sulky, as he had hardly scrambled out of the first spring before he fell into Spring of Drowned Baby, and now he turned into a puppy when doused in cold water.

"It's not your fault we ended up in this loop," Yugi said. "It's actually a nice change."

"So you're new to the fused loop?" Ranma asked resignedly.

"Is that what you call them?" Joey asked, interested despite himself. He was still unhappy with Ranma, but he seemed to know more about the loops than they did.

Ranma sighed. "Guess I'd better give you the Talk."

He produced the necessary equipment from his pocket universe and began the routine Welcome-To-the-Multiverse presentation.

1.7 (The Imaginatrix):

"I don't know how you did it," King Belyugi said wearily as he collapsed into the chair opposite his ancestor/mentor for this loop.

"Whatever do you mean?" Belatem asked innocently.

"The paperwork, the negotiations, being bowed to everywhere you go...I swear I'll go crazy if I hear all those titles one more time!"

Belatem chuckled.

"According to Polgara, Belgarion was the same way. At least your queen isn't as hot-headed and imperious as Ce'Nedra was. How she managed that when they were both raised the same way mistifies me."

Yugi massaged his temples.

"And the worst part of it is I'm stuck doing this for the next twelve years until I have a son so the next Child of Dark can kidnap him! *Why me?* "

"Now you're really sounding like Belgarion," Silk said from the corner, apparently amused.

"And how long have you been there?" Yugi snapped.

"Long enough, my young friend." The little Drasnian came over to sit beside the harrassed Lord of the West. "Perhaps I could suggest a few ways you could occupy your time while you are waiting for Zandramas to strike. If it *is* Zandramas, that is. I'm still having nightmares about *Zorak.* " He shuddered.

Atem had not missed what the Drasnian had said.

"You are not corrupting him, Kheldar. I forbid it."

"Do you now?" Silk's lips twitched in amusement.

Atem fixed him with a cool look.

"I believe you remember what happened to Zedar?"

Silk blanched.

"You wouldn't!"

"Silk, I appreciate the offer, but I know where it will lead and I'd rather not go there," Yugi said, looking a little apologetic. "We could play some Duel Monsters later, though, when I have time."

Silk pouted. "You're no fun."

Yusei sighed as he got what little rest he could in the cell. It wouldn't be too long until Armstrong stepped out of line again and he'd step up to teach him a lesson. Again. This was one of the few things that happened regardless of what he did. He had made sure that there was absolute evidence of Tanner having no knives or magazines, that Yanagi was not trying to smuggle gold through his underpants, that Alex wasn't secretly trying to escape (which admittedly was

actually the only true one,) and thousands of others for every prisoner. And then Armstrong had claimed he must be an enemy spy and challenged him to his rigged duel on those grounds.

In fact, here comes the corrupt lardass now, a grin on his face. "Yusei Fudo-."

And then the cell wall behind Yusei exploded outward. Black vines reached out and grabbed him. "What?" Yusei said. The vines pulled, retreating with Yusei in tow. Soon enough he was flung into the air... and landed on the back of a rather familiar dragon. "What?"

Akiza just giggled at Yusei's stunned face. "Oh god, I've actually caught you of guard for once!" She stated, unable to stop her laughing even as the Black Rose Dragon took to the air.

"Well it doesn't help that you just committed the most unsubtle prison escape in the history of escapes," Yusei pointed out. Akiza was in her Black Rose getup he noticed. If it hadn't been for the presence of her dragon he'd have trouble telling the difference.

"Second most," Akiza corrected. "The most unsubtle is the fact that Rose Tentacles is busy stealing your things back."

Yusei stared at her... and then he laughed. "Goodwin is going to have a fit trying to make all this fit his plans," He said, as the screaming voices of Tanner, Alex and Yanagi sounded out as they roughly landed on the back of the dragon.

"Uh Yusei... what's going on?" Tanner managed to groan out. "I mean, one minute I see Armstrong going to visit your cell, the next I'mm being grabbed by... by..." He stated and looked up at the dragon. "Well. That's different," He noted.

"We're alive at least!" Yanagi noted happily. "And if I'm correct then this lady has a connection to Yusei."

"Well that's obvious... but what about the dragon?" Alex asked.

Yusei chuckled again. "Guys, this is the Black Rose. My girlfriend, a signer like me and the worst escape artist ever," He stated. Akiza smacked the back of his head for that comment.

He honestly wanted to see how exactly Rex and Sayer tried to sort this out.

1.9 (The Imaginatrix):

"Jaden, what did you *do?* "

Jaden looked up at Chazz in surprise.

"What are you talking about, man?"

The other teen scowled. "Don't play innocent with me. All the weird stuff we ever went through had something to do with you. Why have we gone back in time?"

Jaden blinked. Then he grinned. "You're looping?"

"So you *do* know what's happening."

"Yes and no," Jaden responded. "I've been stuck in a time loop for … well, I'm not sure how long by now. Yubel has looped whenever I've seen her, but sometimes things happen differently and I don't even meet her. I don't know why time is looping, but it's nice to know I'm not alone this time."

"…Okay, I'll accept that explanation for now. So why are you in Obelisk Blue?"

Jaden's grin broadened.

"Felt like a change of scenery. Like I said, I've been doing this for awhile and it gets *really* boring after the first few times." A mischievous light entered his eyes then. "Hey, wanna help me out

later on in the loop? I could use a brainstorming partner, and I'll bet you have some great ideas for dealing with some of our opponents."

Chazz stared at Jaden for a long moment before a wicked grin split his face.

"You're on. This is gonna be *fun.* "

1.9 Addition:

Jaden and Chazz stood on the roof of the Academy. Their duel disks were out as they were surrounded by hundreds of Society of Light duellists. Teachers, students, pro duellists... it seemed like everyone on the island was there.

"I blame you for this," Chazz muttered. He narrowly leaped to the side to dodge a blast of ice from Alexis.

"Me?" Jaden asked as Neos punched a particularly menacing looking white Dinosaur. "This was your plan! How was I supposed to know that you didn't want more of a challenge when we took on the entire Society?" He added with a goofy grin on his face.

"You two know this is futile," A glowing Sartorious, standing amongst the throng of brainwashed people, stated. "Why not just give up the satellite keys and-."

"And I've had enough of listening to this guy preach. Time to Chazz. It. Up!" Chazz declared as he held three cards in his hand. "I play Ojama Delta Hurricane, and then Level Modulation!" The three Ojama spirits manifested onto the battlefield and started to spin.

Sartorious laughed. "Insolent fool, do you really think I will allow that to happen?" He asked as his white aura grew brighter... but the spinning simply continued.

Jaden grinned as his eyes glowed gold. "Don't need it," Jaden stated. "Every Light has a Darkness." He noted as the hurricane blasted out, annihilating every monster around them, Neos included. In its wake the imposing form of the Armed Dragon Level 10 glared down at people. "Do it Chazz!"

"Armed Dragon! Attack!" Chazz declared. Discs of dark energy blasted out of the dragon as it collided with each Society of Light member and forced them to faint.

Jaden just grinned as he looked around, the auras of light disappearing from each and every one of them. "Think that might've been a bit overkill?" Jaden asked.

Chazz simply turned and glared at Jaden. "I don't want to hear it Mr. 'I'll defeat Aster with Divine Neos'. If you hadn't done that in the plan, we wouldn't be in this position!"

Jaden just grinned. "See, I missed this. You yelling at me for doing stupid things," Jaden noted.

Chazz, despite himself, grinned back. "Heh, it was pretty fun. So, anything unusual happen in other loops? We've got to wait for them to wake up anyway," He pointed out, leaning against a column.

Jaden nodded. "There's this one set of loops where you use Light and Darkness Dragon," He started.

1.10 (Krika):

Hart stood at the window in his room in Heartland Tower, staring out at the bright lights of the amusment park and the city with indifference. He could almost remember a time when seeing them had brought joy to his heart, but now...now they were just bright lights.

After some time, he heard the sound of the lift rising up, and a familiar pair of bootsteps coming up behind him. He felt a hand on his shoulder, and looked up to see Kite staring down at him with concern.

"How are you feeling, Hart?" The boy looked back at the lights. "They're just lights now." He felt Kite kneel down and hug him, turning him away from the lights. "Hart, I have promised you before, and I promise you again that I will find a way to make you better." Hart looked into his face, and felt a flicker of concern at the worry that was on his face.

"But I can't do that all by myself, Hart. I need your help."

Shark watched as Yuma annihilated Kaze once again, this time using a combination of Galaxy Queen and Baby Tiragon as his main combo. He'd taken to coming up here with Yuma most loops. Roku may have been an old geezer, but he did have quite a bit of experience and skill, even if both of them had accumulated at least as much experience with the loops. Still...Yuma had seemed off. Afterwards, as they were heading back to the city, he brought up the question.

"What's wrong Yuma? You seem pretty worried for someone who just beat a pretty good duelist while using only Level 1 monsters." Yuma chuckled. "No, that was pretty funny. I'm more worried about Kite, actually." Shark frowned. "What about him?" "He wasn't around for the usual meeting. Neither of us have done anything out of the ordinary that would change events that fast, so I honestly don't know what's going on here." Shark nodded. "Hey, we'll probably run into him during the Duel Carnival, so I wouldn't worry about it much." They continued down the path, ignoring the confused looks Bronk and Tori were giving the duo.

Vetrix smiled as he inspected his latest Number acquisition. This one...this one he knew would be part of the key to getting his

revenge on the damnable Dr. Faker. He chuckled at the thought, slowly transitioning into a full on theatric laugh. After a few moments, he pulled himself back - it wouldn't do to fall into the sort of cackling villainy that his nemesis engaged in, after all. When the Duel Carnival started, he'd have plenty of opportunity to snatch Hart and take his powers - did Faker think he didn't know about the deal he'd made that gave the boy powers? He contented himself with a smile at the thoughts of the pain that the ritual would cause the son of his enemy, before noticing that things seemed...odd.

Looking around, he noted that everything seemed frozen. A quick examination of a globe in the room showed that it seemed to be frozen in place, unable to be moved. With a frown, he was about to call upon his crest's power, when a whistling noise reached his ears. Spinning around, he found that standing on the balcony was a youth in a dark grey outfit, with a white robot next to him.

"Kite Tenjo. What a surprise to meet you under these circumstances. I take it you are responsible for this...field?"

This comment seemed to rile up the robot. "Hey! I'll have you know that this field is maintain by yours trul-."

"Zip it, Orbital." Kite's words were cold and precise, but his eyes never left Vetrix, who was starting to feel as if he was missing something.

"You..you got it Boss!" The robot quieted down with some mumbling.

"I presume you are hunting Numbers for your father then? Are you going to try me next?" The boy smiled, and his coat was suddenly bleached white by some sort of energy, as a Duel Disk appeared on his wrist.

"You will not touch my brother, Vetrix." The white was suddenly overtaken by red, as he began to glow with a power that felt oddly familiar for a moment.

Vetrix was not cowed. "Then you shall be the first to fall in my revenge!" His Disk appeared, and the two faced off, energy crackling between the two.

It was the third day in the carnival, and Yuma and Shark were very confused. Not only had they not seen neither hide nor hair of Kite (Yuma had take to specifically seeking out Cameron early on, in order to avoid that potential catastrophe), but the Arclights seemed to be no-shows as well. Still, both had easily qualified for the finals by this point, so they were taking it easy.

"I hope this isn't one of those strange loops where we find out that Faker only has one kid, or something...though it would be interesting to see who would replace Kite in the finals." Yuma commented, watching a Duel between Bronk and Caswell in progress. Shark rolled his eyes.

"I'm going with him siding with Vetrix, for whatever reason." "Now that would be pretty interesting."

"If I was going to do that, I would never side with Vetrix. Chris, maybe. But not Vetrix." The two of them spun around, to find the object of their conversation standing behind them, a smirk on his face. "Since I take it you've done this sort of thing before, care to fill me in?"

Yuma was the first one to break the short silence. "Where have you been all this time?"

Kite's smirk became more pronounced. "Cleaning up."

Authors Note: Welcome everyone to the latest in the series of Time Loop Fanfictions. These loops are inspired by Saphroneth's MLP Time Loops in that these loops are written by myself and others from the Spacebattles Forums and then put together by me. If you would wish to contribute but don't wish to join Spacebattles and post in the

topic, then you may send your possible loop to me by PM to be judged.

These time loops use the system established by Innortal who has written time loops for Naruto, Bleach, Ranma and Harry Potter amongst others. The following info is important.

When a loop is started for a series there is one person who is always looping or "Awake" in every time loop. They are known as the Anchor, and are usually the main character. At first they'll be by themselves, but as time goes on more people are added to the loop, becoming "awake" in certain loops. A time loop itself usually goes from when something important first happens and ends either upon death or other forms of demise or after a certain amount of time. (This amount varies from universe to universe.)

When someone does something that breaks the world and forces a new loop they can end up looping in someone else's time loop. This is called a Fused Loop. The worse the breakage, the more likely the universe will make the loop something horrible for the loopers as punishment.

Each of the individual Yugioh series is its own separate set of time loops. Each of the main boys (and partners, if they have them) are the anchors for each series respectively. The only difference is that it's easier to force a crossover between the series loops.

Loop Notes: 1.5: An example of how Yugioh Time Loops work. This is a fused loop between the different series.

1.5 Addition: An extra added by myself after the main loop. As strong as you can be 96, you don't count for much in the presence of gods.

1.6: Crossover with Ranma 1/2 who has been looping for much, MUCH longer than the Yugioh crew would have.

1.7: Crossover with The Belgariad/Malorean

1.9 Addition: Another addition by myself after the fact as Imaginatrix felt it was lacking and I saw that as a challenge.

Chapter 2

"I doubt that any of you have heard of me," Paradox said. "I don't come from anyone of your times."

"You're one of Z-ONE's friends, you came back in time because Ener-D goes out of control again because of reckless synchro summoning and you're trying to do this instead of helping out Aporia in my time," Yusei deadpanned. "Oh, and you use Malefic Monsters that are mostly stolen dragons."

Yugi and Jaden glared at Yusei. Both of them had wanted to be the one to say it. Paradox, on the other hand, gaped, then slowly closed his mouth. "I'm not sure how you know... but if there's any one man who would, it would probably be you, Yusei Fudo," Paradox rationalized. "Although you left out that while you may have saved the world many times, it was all against foes who were using the same cards."

"The Seal of Orichalcos didn't," Yugi countered.

"The Earthbound Immortals existed years before Duel Monsters was made. If I didn't fight them with cards, it'd have been with actual dragons," Yusei added.

"And if it didn't exist then there'd be no actual counter to Nightshroud," Jaden concluded.

"All problems that could've been dealt with in other ways. There's no good this game did without equal evils!" Paradox insisted. "The future, if duel monsters remains, is a doomed one!"

Suddenly a portal opened up. Yuma leaped through it with a duel disk in one hand and cotton candy in the other. "Oh hey! You guys are the famous duelists of the past!" Yuma said excitedly. "Yugi

Motou, Jaden Yuki and Yusei Fudo, they talk about you in duel schools."

"So wait, I'm a school subject?" Yusei asked. "So you must be from the future."

"Yep!"

Paradox just smacked his head against his futuristic bike. "Right, that's it. Duel, now."

"But what about-."

"I'M NOT LISTENING AND WE ARE DUELING NOW!" Paradox insisted as his bike transformed.

"Think we touched some of his buttons?" Yuma asked.

"Definitely," Jaden agreed, grinning as his eyes glowed. Yusei let his mark of the dragon glow as Yugi and Atem switched out.

"Right then, Duel Disk go!" Yuma shouted as he tossed the duel disk into the air to set up. "Duel Gazer, let's roll. Broadcast mode," he added quickly... and after a brief pause the augmented reality gazer projected it's holograms. A rarely used option but useful none the less.

As Paradox fused with his dragon, Yuma laughed. "Wow, so we're doing a fusing thing here?" he asked.

"Perhaps it is time that we show them how we duel," Astral suggested. He had manifested after Malefic World had been activated and had been seen by the others as a result of the field spell.

"Oh, I know how you duel. And you won't be able to stop me," Paradox declared. "After all, defending my dragon is going to be my

Malefic Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon!" As he announced this, the dragon of glowing energy appeared, simply having a black half mask and armor patched onto it. "When on the field, I can have it intercept any battle between a Malefic monster and a Xyz monster. With that I end my turn."

Yuma just grinned. "I bet you don't know this. I overlay myself and Astral!" Yuma announced. He and Astral turned into red and blue light respectively, and both shot into the air and combined together. Both of their voices rang out. "ZeXal Morph!"

In their place was an armored and more adult version of Yuma, his hair orange with red forelocks. The gazer had disappeared, replaced with a gleam in the being's golden eyes. "ZeXal II!" He announced. He spoke in both of their voices.

Paradox foamed at the mouth. He choked out what sounded like half thought up words... and then he and the dragon collapsed.

The four slowly looked over at him. "I think we just knocked him unconscious by mocking him," Jaden noted.

"Only if his duel disk deactivates," Atem warned. "I've run into that problem a few times... get back!"

Suddenly Malefic Truth Dragon sprang into the air and roared at the duelists. "The dragon's going feral," Yusei said. Malefic Truth Dragon gathered dark energy into its maw. "You need to finish it quickly, Yuma! I'm guessing at this rate it could destroy Japan before Paradox wakes up!"

"Not something I think we can shield either. We're good, but not that good!" Jaden said.

"Right. Shining Draw!" Yuma exclaimed. He could've used that outside of the combination at this point. It was just fun using it and funnier to see Paradox's reaction. "I play Monster Reborn, bringing back Utopia!" He declared. Utopia had been sent to the grave to stop

damage from an earlier attack. The Number nodded to the combined duo. "And now, Rank-Up Magic Numeron Force!" As Utopia changed into Utopia Ray Victory, both Malefic Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon and Malefic Truth Dragon seemed to lose a bit of their glow. Energy was still being gathered in Truth Dragon's maw, though. "Utopia Ray Victory, attack!" Yuma and Astral's voices declared. The multi-colored four armed knight charged forward and with a flash of a consumed Xyz Material it slashed the dragon just before it would release its blast. The dragon glared at the knight and then collapsed. It dissolved into holographic sparkles and Paradox, who was for once whole, collapsed out of it. The energy field of Malefic World dissipated as Zexal II separated once more into Yuma and Astral.

"Way too close there guys," Yusei pointed out. "If he had gotten that attack off..."

"Then we would've been dead, I know," Yuma stated. "Gimme a break, I don't usually get these loops."

Jaden chuckled. "True... you should see how he reacts when we mix things up a bit," He said.

"Such as?"

"Paradox vs. the three dark lords of Duelling to start with."

Atem nodded. "We don't really change things up for your loops do we Yuma?" He asked.

"Does Crow's loop count?" Yuma queried.

"No," The three countered. Yusei slowly walked over to Paradox and picked him up.

"Get the dragons you need back, everyone. I need to take Paradox back with me. I plan to use him as a peace offering to Z-ONE and the others, see if we can't make your future more futuristic Yuma,"

Yusei commented with a grin. "And besides, that was technically one of my loops."

Yuma nodded. "And I need to get back too... I want to convince Vector to be nice. Not easy," He said.

"That's a good point, how are you getting back?" Jaden asked. "I'll probably hitch a ride with Yusei and this is Yugi's time." Suddenly a dark shadow entered the sky, a large golden airship having arrived.

"Different Dimension Airship," Yuma said off-handedly.

The other three were silent for a few seconds. "All in favor of taking the Airship?" Atem asked.

"Aye!" Yusei, Jaden and the now conscious Paradox chorused. Yuma just groaned even as the others laughed.

Jaden sighed. For once he had started off early. Early enough to have Yubel with him. She had calmed down too, since she was looping as well. "Too young to stop the light getting to Aster's dad," Jaden muttered. That had pssed him off. The one thing he had never been able to change about things even while looping was Aster losing his dad.

"Yes, but with me around we have... opportunities." A haunting voice entered the area as Yubel appeared in spiritual form next to Jaden. "And I have an idea for a prank we can do this loop."

Jaden raised an eyebrow. "Go on..."

Syrus groaned as he walked back up to the stands. It wasn't that he didn't like passing again... but he had shown off too much and was probably destined for Obelisk Blue. He sighed and glanced at the hallway. This is about when Jaden showed up before. He almost let

out a startled yelp as The Supreme King walked through... and gave him a thumbs up. "Jaden?" Syrus whispered.

"Hello peasant," The Supreme King stated in a voice that would have intimidated him... if it wasn't for the fact that in addition to the echo, Jaden seemed to be speaking in a faux-British accent. "I am to understand that the exams are occurring. If so, then I, the Supreme King, demand that I have mine battle test started."

Syrus resisted the temptation to start hitting his head against something hard. Crowler already seemed to be taking offence to the loud armored duelist. "Jay, next time you do this sort of thing, give me a warning," the blue-haired teen whispered as he passed by. Jaden just responded by giving him another thumbs up.

Crowler frowned as the applicant's first monster, a Winged Kuriboh, shattered at the hands of his Ancient Gear Golem. "Check your gear, your life points haven't changed." He pointed out.

"Forsooth! Dost thou not know Winged Kuriboh's ability?" the increasingly annoying candidate asked. Of course, the damage negation. "Now it is mine own turn!" He declared, drawing. "I play mine Polymerization spell, fusing together my Ocean and Woodsman into Elemental Hero Terra Firma!" The white planet based Elemental Hero rose up out of a portal. "Then I play mine De-Fusion, splitting them back into Avian and Burstinatrix." The fused hero divided into blue and green lights, the two components posing.

Crowler raised an eyebrow. "A skilful move was there young man, but you've just thrown it away by getting rid of Terra Firma," he commented.

"Verily it doth seem mine play hath fooled thee," The Supreme King (as he called himself) said. "I now offer mine servants up as tribute. Come forth most powerful of fiends, the Maiden of Darkness who doth turn hope into despair. Yubel!" As he declared this, instead of simply disappearing, vines burst from the ground, wrapped around the heroes and dragged them under. The ground broke open again

as Yubel flew out and landed in front of the candidate to be. "Yubel, compel his monster to attack."

Yubel grinned as her eyes glowed red. Ancient Gear Golem's eyes did the same as it reached forward. "Gear Golem, stop!" Crowler ordered.

"It doth seem thou knowest Yubel's effect," The Supreme King noted, even as Yubel was hit. "When thou dost engage her in battle, instead of mineself taking damage, thou shalt." With the declaration, a vine appeared on the field, growing speedily towards Crowler and flowering. The flower didn't open but instead formed a fist, striking Crowler. "Verily, that is game."

"So tell me Jay, was it really worth it in the end?" Syrus asked his best friend. He was dressed in the standard Obelisk Blue male uniform. He resisted the urge to laugh at Jaden who had been forced by Crowler to at least put the uniform on... and had done so over his black armor.

"Definitely."

2.3.

Three figures stood at the top of the Duel Tower: Atem, clad in Yugi's black top; Kaiba, wearing his typical gravity defying jacket; Joey, wearing his blue and white striped shirt. Each of them held their hands out in a card-holding position... and there was a flare of light as a trio of Eyes of Anubis's appeared on their foreheads, one on each. As the light glowed a single card materialized in each of their hands. In Atem's Slifer the Sky Dragon, in Kaiba's Obelisk the Tormentor and in Joey's the Winged Dragon of Ra.

"I wouldn't believe it if I didn't see it," Kaiba remarked. "You actually won a duel against Marik Wheeler?"

Joey grinned. "It's all through stamina Kaiba, you've just gotta take the pain."

"Or as it usually is in your duels, dumb luck."

"Don't you start with me rich boy!" Joey yelled. "I won this fair and square. The lack of lightning trying to strike me down kinda proves that."

The trio looked up at that comment. The night was filled with dark clouds, but none of them looked particularly stormy. "That does raise another question... what is your Millennium Item?" Atem asked. "Seto's is the Millennium Rod, I understand that."

"Joey Wheeler best represents the scales." The three looked around as they tried to find the source of the mysterious voice. Shadi slowly stepped into view. "Do not try to excuse yourself, Pharaoh. I have seen into your mind, and I understand that you three have lived this life before. I came here to give young Wheeler his item," Shadi stated, slowly walking towards Joey.

"Uh, I don't have to have it implanted in my eye do I?" Joey asked.

Shadi chuckled. "No. A pair of scales would look odd in that position," he said, handing his Millennium Scales over to Joey.

Atem blinked... and then grinned. "I see, Joey's personality reflects Karim because of his use of fusion monsters," He noted. Out of all of them, Joey's deck had the highest number of Fusion Monsters that weren't generic, although there were many he couldn't access.

"Indeed," Shadi commented. "It is good to see that you retain your memories of times past, Pharaoh." He started to fade away. "I hope I will not be needed later." And with that, he disappeared.

Kaiba looked at the Scales, then to the incredulous Joey. "Meh. You got lucky that he could tie you to one Wheeler," he said.

"Call me by my first name, Seto," Joey said with a slight grimace. "You keep giving me flashbacks to that really odd loop. "I mean, I get I represent fire and that we should help the environment, but just because my last name is Wheeler doesn't mean I have to replace him!" Then the rest of Kaiba's statement registered, and his rant was forgotten. "Wait, luck? How does Second in Duelist Kingdom, Fourth in Battle City and Quarter Finalist in your own tournament sound? And that last one was against a deck that you needed a Chaos Monster for!"

"Beginner's luck, Wheeler," Kaiba said with a malicious grin.

"Go take a long walk off a short pier," Joey muttered... before grinning himself. "Koiba." Kaiba's eye twitched in the way it always did when something had pssed him off.

"Regardless," Atem said quickly, hoping to stop a fight before it got started, "we now have the necessary cards to handle Yako's challenge individually."

"I still don't think that Wheeler should have one. He dealt with Bandit Keith just fine," Kaiba stated.

Joey just rolled his eyes. "He can be sneaky. I don't want to have to be staring down two Wicked Gods if he's been clever... but then I don't actually need Ra for that," he said. He held up his hand, a red 85 glowing on it. "Let's just say if he does... I'm gonna start doing some cheating too."

2.4.

"It's over, Pharaoh!" Yami Marik declared. "You're almost all out of life points, and your partner isn't looking too good."

Jaden grimaced as he looked to his side. It was his younger body... and a gigantic headache. Apparently his Supreme King self had replaced Atem's role in this world while his regular self replaced Yugi.

They were both him, but not... And it resulted in the transformed state essentially being his and Yubel's fused form. He was fading in and out, and that was one headache he didn't want to deal with.

"And Slifer the Sky Dragon is all too eager to chow down on your meagre monsters!"

And there was the giant red serpent in the room. It turned out that despite his dorm, he was actually a bearer of Ra. It could be from defeating Franz, but it honestly mystified him. Still, the look on Yami Marik's face when he had managed to summon it out on the first turn with a combination of Polymerization and De-Fusion had been worth it.

"Well, Slifer is going to have to wait," Jaden stated with a grin. "Because I still have one more trick up my sleeve. I play Parallel World Fusion!" He declared.

From the sidelines Kaiba just watched. He hadn't had a fused loop with Jaden yet and found himself rather impressed by the spirit the boy kept up. "That's new," He muttered.

"Yeah, but I heard that Pegasus decided to release a whole bunch of odd cards while Battle City was going on Seto," Mokuba noted. "The fact he uses them so well is shocking though."

"What's he gonna pull out that can beat Slifer though?" Joey wondered aloud. He was awake as Kaiba was and simply wanting to see the best moves Jaden could pull off. "With that Infinite Cards out, Slifer has 8000 attack points. No regular monster has that sorta strength."

"We have to believe in him," Téa insisted. "His deck has never let him down."

"I combine my Grand Mole, Neos, Sparkman, Flare Wingman and Flare Scarab!" Jaden declared, the five monsters rising out from the

grave and gathering into his deck. "In order to summon forth Elemental Hero Divine Neos!"

Yami Marik looked on in shock as the golden armored hero arose... then snorted. "Such a presumptuous card, let Slifer show him what real godly power is like!" He declared, the god blasting Neos down to 500 attack points.

Jaden shook his head. It was a pain that Divine Neos had less attack points, but that was about to change. "I activate Divine Neos special ability! I remove Shining Flare Wingman from my Graveyard for it to gain 500 attack points and its effect, increasing the attack!" He shouted, Neos thrusting a hand out into the darkness. A glowing fiery image of Shining Flare Wingman appeared and was absorbed into the Monster, causing its attack to shoot up to 1000 points, and then to 4600. "Next I play Monster Reborn, which brings back my Elemental Hero Terra Firma!" he continued, the White Hero appearing alongside the golden armored one. "And to keep those attack points stable, I'm sending the Elemental Hero Captain Gold in my hand to the grave to get Skyscraper!" A golden hero burst out of the card and punched the ground, the holographic buildings appearing swiftly.

"And yet it's still not enough. Even if you could attack me directly with them there'd be no point," Yami Marik insisted. True, his life points were as impressive as his monster, at 8999 after an earlier manipulation of the Winged Dragon of Ra.

"Which is why I play my last two cards! Quick Attack and Gift of the Martyr," Jaden stated. "The first lets Divine Neos attack this turn, and the latter means that Terra Firma will be going back to the graveyard, but gives his power to Divine Neos!" Neos nodded to Terra Firma as the latter turned into dust and its own power increased to 7100. Divine Neos spread its wings and leaped into the air.

Yami Marik's vein bulging face contorted into a look of dismay. "No! With Skyscraper your monster's attack becomes higher than Slifer's!" he declared.

"You've got it! Divine Neos attack!" Jaden commanded. As Divine Neos flew down, Shining Flare Wingman and Terra Firma appeared alongside it. Terra Firma and Divine Neos both punched the god at once, causing it to shatter. The pieces fell near Yami Marik, his life points falling to 8899. "And thanks to Shining Flare Wingman's copied effect, you take the attack points as damage."

"NO!" Yami Marik yelled. Divine Neos flared out his wings as the godly hero landed in front of the corrupted side of Marik. And suddenly Neos glowed. The light glowed brighter and brighter as the dark side yelled out in pain... but as he did, the light receded to the point that he almost darkened.

"And I have to end my turn as I haven't got any more cards in my hand. When I do Divine Neos loses the attack boost from both of his teammates," Jaden noted as Divine Neos' attack reverted to 1000. "But if I'm right..." As he trailed off the light died down completely and revealed Marik, the true Marik, in place of his counterpart.

"So... how did you know that was going to work?" Joey asked. They were on the blimp back home, as Marik had surrendered soon after Jaden's spectacular combo. "I mean, Yug probably told you what he did once but that doesn't explain how."

Jaden grinned. "It was more a case of picking three monsters that have experience with this sort of thing," he admitted. "Divine Neos took down an embodiment of Darkness, Shining Flare Wingman has taken down so many bad guys it almost isn't funny, and Terra Firma is my monster of choice in some loops."

Joey looked at Jaden incredulously. "So what your saying is... you through three monsters together and hoped for the best?" he asked.

"Pretty much."

Joey grinned. "You're my kinda duelist Jaden," He admitted.

Jaden responded with a grin of his own.

2.5. (I'm going to point out here that for now I'm using any English names I can for the Barians. If names change, they will be changed.)

Shark awoke and looked around. He was in Rio's hospital room.

"Shark?" And there was the voice of his sister. He looked at her. It was strange how over the loops, both those with her in it and those without her, he had grown distant and - why was she taking off the bandages? She wasn't even supposed to be able to move.

A red glow surrounded Rio as she did. Shark breathed a sigh of relief as Rio sat up. "Shark... do you feel like your repeating things sometimes?" she asked.

"Yeah, I do. Welcome to the loops Rio," Shark said… "And yes, I'm calling you Rio for now. I'm used to people calling me Shark, and Merag doesn't roll off the tongue," He pointed out.

"And Nasch is easy?" Rio countered. "So, loops huh? You've been doing this before?" She asked.

Shark nodded. "Actually, I was about to fix you up and go to the Barian world," he told her.

"Why?"

"To bring peace."

In a bar in Neo Domino, a throng of voices sang out in a drunken hurrah. Nasch simply grinned as he downed a shot of pure vodka and shivered. "By Don Thousand's stupid plans that's strong stuff." He commented, in energy form. He and the Barian Emperors (minus Vector, who he'd simply been unable to find,) had arrived at the bar

in human form closely followed by Kite and Yuma, the latter in Zexal II form claiming to represent Astral World. The gathering had been intended to start peace talks between Astral and the others. What had ended up happening was that the Emperors, Kite and Yuma had managed to get drunk and a drunken party was being had with any pretence of subtlety long tossed away. Mizar and Kite, in Barian and Red Coat forms respectively, were passed out on the counter after a competitive drinking contest, Alito, Girag and Merag were trying to duel Yuma 3 on 1 in a drunken duel. A drunken duel that was simply getting more and more hilarious by the second as Yuma was using drunken Shining Draws and the three Barians had snatched up some fake Numbers before arriving on Earth.

The barkeep was Yusei Fudo which was probably the only way Alit, Kite, Merag and he had been able to get any booze in the first place. Dumon was actually holding a conversation with him now... out of all of them, only he and Dumon weren't drunk. At least he had a reason since his powers were water-based... but on the other hand the booze had made him more sociable.

"Oh we heard about the Earthbound Immortals even back home," Dumon admitted. "A very harsh task for such fragile beings, but I assure you if you had failed we would have stepped in to stop them."

"Doubtful," Yusei replied. "I know these number cards and I'm telling you that even if you had taken down Goodwin, you'd have to deal with the King of the Underworld afterwards."

"Having fun Dumon?" Nash asked, pulling a stool up next to them.

Dumon chuckled. "Indeed my friend. It reminds me of such celebrations in times long past, even if the details are lost on me now," He stated. he glanced over at Yuma as he played Rank Random Magic -Booze Force. "I must admit I thought that there would be a clash due to him."

"Well it's an Earth saying," Nasch said. "Alcohol can unite the bitterest of enemies."

"Don't I know it," Yusei agreed, looking out at the bar. Oh well, Jack's always looking for work, he can fix the place up.

2.6.

Yusei sighed as he walked up to the chair. A Hogwarts loop was usually time off, but it meant he was away from any machines until a break, which irritated the mechanic in him. Still, he had promised the guys to try something out when he got one of these.

The Sorting Hat was placed on Yusei's head and the students waited. And waited. And waited some more until the Sorting Hat finally spoke up. "Headmaster, did you put me on a manikin? I can't get a single thought out of him."

Yusei couldn't help it and burst out laughing. "Oh, a wise guy huh?" the hat said. "You're cunning enough then, Slytherin!"

Yusei didn't stop laughing even as he put the hat down. Putting up with Malfoy's crap was worth it to see how the hat reacted to Clear Mind.

2.6 Addition (Krika.)

Jack sighed as he strode up. He invariably got sorted into Gryffindor, but like Yusei, he wanted to give something a shot this time around.

The hat settled down on his head, and was still for a moment, as if thinking, which surprised nobody. Sortings generally took a couple of seconds.

What surprised everybody was when the hat suddenly began screaming in pain, burst into flames, and threw itself off of Jack's head.

Everyone at the staff table sprang to their feet, drew their wands and launched quenching spells at both hat and boy. Professor Mcgonagall quickly took charge, quieting down the hall, and after a moment's thought, she shooed Jack to Hufflepuff as a place-holder. As he walked over to the table with a broad grin on his face, he saw Yusei, Crow, and Akiza (the latter two at Gryffindor and Ravenclaw, respectively) nearly falling off of their seats with laughter. Oh, this was so going to be worth the probing questions he'd be getting from Dumbledore later.

2.7. (Krika)

"I...I give you this. Give Z-ONE the hope I have found..." With those words, and throwing a glowing red energy construct at Yusei's Duel Runner, Aporia breathed his last for the second time in his life, though temporally speaking it was the first time it had happened. Strictly speaking, this time didn't count since this Aporia was a maybe-robot-maybe-cyborg copy of the original, but neither the temporal semantics of what happened first or robot rights were related to the issue at hand.

Yusei, to the surprise of the non-loopers present, did not mount up his bike. Instead, he slipped under it, and opening up a flap to reveal the Yusei Gear engine, began tinkering with it, several parts of which were now glowing reddish.

"Umm...Yusei...are you going to stop Z-ONE?" Crow, being one of the non-loopers present, wasn't sure what had come over his friend. Yusei popped out from under his bike. "Not before I figure out what the hell he did to my Runner." A quick glance showed Z-ONE hovering there, apparently as confused as Crow and Sherry, while Akiza, Jack, and the twins were all looping, and thus not overly surprised by this behaviour. He slipped back under his bike, while Crow looked to the rest of the group, who either gave an unconcerned shrug or equally confused looks, depending on their looping status.

Some indeterminate loops later...

Jack had woken up this loop inside the massive penthouse apartment that he lived in while working under Goodwin. It generally took a couple of days for them to get together, and figure out what the game plan was, so he used the time to kick back, relax, and beat schmucks like Hunter Pace who had stood no chance against him even before he started looping. Yusei was scheduled to arrive in the city the day after next, at which point they'd start to get people collected, though he sometimes took the initiative to track down Akiza.

He was currently relaxing on the roof, when a glowing red dot in the sky above Satellite caught his attention. He watched it curiously for about a minute before he realised what it was and his jaw dropped.

Flying towards him on a Duel Runner that was not only painted red, but was glowing with a red aura that appeared to form wings on either side was Yusei.

"...that's new."

Yami Marik simply stared in befuddlement. For some strange reason, Joey Wheeler had brought a large coat with him and it mystified him as to why. "If you're worried about getting cold up here, Ra's flames will be all too happy to warm you up," he said with a sneer.

Joey grinned. "This ain't a coat, it's fire retardant!" He declared. "Let's see your dragon burn me now!"

A pair of loud slaps showed that both Yugi and Kaiba had facepalmed. "Joey... seriously?" Yugi muttered.

"No! You should be dead by now! Ra incinerated you and your monsters!" Yami Marik exclaimed in disbelief, even as Gearfreid raced forward and smacked his shield against the dark side's stomach. Yami Marick collapsed to the ground as Joey panted. He

waited until he saw his opponent's life points hit zero and then threw the smouldering and mostly ashes coat off of him.

"Fire. Retardant. Coat." Joey stated, grinning goofily. In reality the coat had been a regular coat and he had hidden the power ring he got in that one loop. Even then the coat had been destroyed. "It's a miracle I'm still con- oh there I go." He noted, collapsing onto the field.

Kaiba still insisted to this day that Joey was lucky that his ring actually worked on Ra's fire.

Loop notes: 2.1. A Bonds Beyond Time Loop. Basically crossover loops where Yugi, Jaden and Yusei at least are all crossed over. In the loops that they aren't, Paradox plays a part as more of an enforcer for Z-ONE.

2.3. Number 85 is Crazy Box... a Number that relies entirely on dice rolls and luck. Also confirmed here are Captain Planet crossover loops and Abridged loops if you look hard enough. And yes, Joey has won his duel against Marik at some point.

2.4. First of many.

2.5. Because even Barians have a bar.

2.6. Addition. In Krika's own words "Because Jack's soul is on *fire* , yo."

2.7. In Krika's own words "Because when present technology gets boring to work with, you need to grab whatever future technology you can get your hands on."

2.8. Because Joey is literally on fire, yo.

Chapter 3

3.1.

It happened all of a sudden. A rift had opened in time and space while he, Jack and Crow had been riding along the Turbo duel circuit. That had set off the alarms in Yusei's head, as Paradox was never so obvious about these things. Ever. The three raced after Paradox, who slowly looked back at them. And that was when Yusei noticed the second issue: Paradox was unmasked. More unusual behaviour. "Ah, Yusei, I'd love to stay and duel, but I have a future to fix!" Paradox declared. "And this time I'm not letting you stop me. No Stardust Dragon stealing and no plot to go back and get Pegasus."

"What makes you think I'm going to let you escape?" Yusei asked. Paradox smirked as his Duel Runner changed, taking on the shape it had assumed so many times before.

"Because while you have many skills, I don't think flying is one of them," Paradox noted smugly as he floated off.

The three just stared as they slowed their Duel Runners to a halt. "Did Paradox just pass up on a chance to lure out Stardust Dragon?" Crow asked.

"Something isn't right about this. He's heading towards Satellite and the old Ener-D," Jack remarked. "He's probably planning on using Z-ONE's own plan... but he seemed too confident."

Crow's eyes widened. "Oh crud, what if Paradox is looping?"

"Then I need to get there all the faster," Yusei remarked, the red energy wings on the runner flaring up. "Jack, Crow, I know it's a pain to ask but..." He started. Jack and Crow just smirked, each throwing their dragon cards at Yusei.

"If he's that confident, then he's probably got more dragons," Crow said. "We aren't letting you go without that."

Jack nodded and gripped the handlebars of the Phoenix Whirlwind. "We'll get the others and meet you there..." He trailed off as he looked into the air. The others soon looked up as well and noted the presence of a truly giant airship.

"The Different Dimension Airship. Yuma's got to have a reason for being here." Yusei noted, revving the Duel Runner and taking to the air after the Airship and Paradox

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In the Airship, Yuma frowned. "I still can't believe that you would come to me on this. Aren't we supposed to be enemies?" he asked. Dumon looked uncomfortable being in this situation while Shark (as Nasch) stood to the side and Mizar glared at him. Kite and Astral were the only other people there.

"As usual human you understand precious little," Mizar said. "I bound Galaxy-Eyes Tachyon Dragon through my will. In the hands of a pretender such as that man he could cause serious destruction without intending to."

"And that could harm not just your world, but both Astral and Barian worlds by proxy," Dumon added. "And I believe that leaving another Number card and another Galaxy-Eyes card in his hands is a bad idea in general as well."

Shark shook his head. "Shark Drake isn't even a Dragon and he still took it. The man is grasping at straws here," he remarked.

"I'd disagree," Kite said. "The fact he was confident enough to steal no less than three of our strongest monsters is worrying in and of itself."

"Either way, it's not a good idea to let him keep them," Yuma remarked. "But as fast as the airship is, we aren't going to be able to

catch up with Paradox well enough."

"So you need a ride?" Shark asked with a grin. He pulled forward his motorcycle. "This baby is already a modified Duel Runner, you should be able to catch up like this."

"And how am I supposed to fly like that!" Yuma shouted.

Astral floated forward. "The answer is in the Numbers," he said as he pulled out Number 91: Thunder Spark Dragon. The bike flared to life and crackled with electricity.

"The only reason we're getting you to do this human is because you have the most options against these cards," Mizar pointed out. "Don't screw this up."

"I believe the fate of all three worlds is enough motivation," Dumon said.

"Yeah, just pile on the encouragement," Yuma muttered. He hopped onto the bike which floated into the air. "I'm just gonna have to feel the flooooow!" He declared as the bike raced off after Paradox.

Kite shook his head. The ship was already being piloted by Orbital mostly, so there wasn't much they needed to do to compensate. None the less... "Orbital, step on it!"

"Y-you got it B-b-boss!"

Paradox glared at the two speeding shapes behind him, one red, one blue. "Argh, interruption after interruption! I've had enough of this," he shouted at the two. "I will make this future the perfect one Yusei Fudo and Yuma Tsukimo, and neither of you can stop me as I play Malefic World!"As he played the card the entire area around the three became distorted. "And then I send Stardust Spark Dragon and Number 32: Shark Drake from my Extra Deck to the graveyard to summon Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon and Malefic Number 32:

Shark Drake!" Soon enough the darker side to Stardust Dragon appeared, almost utterly mirrored compared to Malefic Stardust Dragon, while Malefic Shark Drake was almost totally coated in black and white metal. The two monsters charged at Yusei and Yuma as Paradox accelerated. "And it seems they're hungry. Try not to die!" Paradox declared.

"Stardust Spark Dragon? When did he get my Duel Dragon?" Yusei remarked. Yuma moved the bike to fly alongside him.

"Dunno, but I'm willing to bet those monsters aren't holograms," Yuma responded. The two suddenly banked to either side as they narrowly dodged a blast of dark energy from Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon.

"I do believe that the human term is 'Is the pope catholic?'" Astral remarked. "But it means we can't spend time messing around!"

"Don't worry, I've got this one," Yusei said as he drew… and took a steadying breath. His mark of the dragon flared to life."I play One for One, sending my Shield Wing to the Graveyard to summon Balance Shooter!" The balanced cannon appeared even as Yusei had to fly higher to avoid a bite from Shark Drake. "Next I play Tuning, which lets me add a Synchron to my hand, but I need to send a card from my deck to the graveyard," he continued, drawing out Junk Synchron.

Yuma's eyes widened as Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon turned its head to him and blasted out energy. "Hey, it isn't even my turn!" Yuma pointed out.

"This isn't a normal duel Yuma. If we're going to catch up to Paradox then we need to start fighting instead of duelling," Astral told his partner.

"Right, draw! I summon my Gagaga Magician. Then I also summon out my Gagaga Girl, using her effect to summon herself at the same

level as her master!" Yuma declared as the master and student duo of his deck appeared.

"I summon Debris Dragon which lets me summon back Shield Wing!" Yusei announced as his two monsters swiftly appeared. "I tune Level 4 Debris Dragon, Level 1 Balance Shooter and Level 3 Shield Wing."

Yuma grinned at this. "And I overlay my Gagaga Magician and Girl and build the overlay network!" He added. Debris Dragon separated into four green rings, surrounding Shield Wing and Balance Shooter and dissolved them into four stars.

"The ruler's heartbeat, will now file through here!"Yusei declared. As he did so the galactic spiral portal of the Numbers overlay network manifested at the end of it. "Take witness to its creation-shaking power!". The dark energies of Gagaga Magician and Gagaga Girl raced through the ring and into the network. Simultaneously the network exploded outward in energy as a pillar of green light flared up, consuming the rings. "Synchro Summon! My very soul, Red Dragon Archfiend!"

"Xyz Summon! Number 39: Utopia!" Yuma added.

As the light started to clear the two Malefic Monsters charged forward intent on destroying the two duelists, an orb of water gathering in Malefic Shark Drake's Mouth as Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon fired another energy blast... before the symbol of the Gagaga magicians appeared upon Malefic Shark Drake and its orb fell apart. The energy blast of Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon raced towards Yuma, before simply being punched away as Red Dragon Archfiend flew at it with a roared challenge.

"Attack!" Yuma and Yusei declared.

"Absolute Powerforce!"

"Rising Sun Slash!"

Malefic Shark Drake leapt into the air intent on preventing Red Dragon Archfiend's attack. What it hadn't considered was that Utopia had thrown both of its swords at the monster. It quickly bisected Malefic Shark Drake fast enough so that the fiery red fist of Red Dragon Archfiend slammed through into Malefic Stardust Spark Dragon. Both Malefic monsters exploded into holographic shards as Yusei and Yuma were allowed sighs of relief.

"Can't stop now, we need to keep going." Yusei noted as his Duel Runner revved, the Mark of the Dragon disappearing on his arm, instead manifesting in full on his back.

Yuma grinned. "You couldn't scare me away from this if you tried Yusei." He noted, even as he and Astral turned into blue and red light.

Paradox laughed as his Malefic Number 107: Galaxy-Eyes Tachyon Dragon and Malefic Galaxy Eyes Photon Dragon blasted away any competition. The remaining signers had, predictably, come to try and stop him, but the combined powers of his Malefic monsters had made them little more than speed bumps... the fact that neither Crow Hogan nor Jack Atlas had summoned their Dragons yet was worrying, however, especially as most of his Malefic Duel Dragons had already been destroyed by them, the others sent to destroy Yusei Fudo, aside from one. "Foolish signers! This was inevitable!" He shouted. "I've seen the future falter many times, and I plan to finally fix it permanently.

"What are you doing here Paradox?" Paradox blinked and looked behind him. Primo stood there on top of a building. "Z-ONE gave you specific orders as a backup plan, and to neutralize Yusei Fudo." Primo noted.

Paradox laughed. An odd, twisted cackle of a laugh. "Oh, you presume so much and yet know so little Aporia!" Paradox said. Primo flinched even as Paradox continued. "I've been repeating these events at least twice now, and both times I was destroyed at

the hands of Yusei Fudo and friends of his. I've even seen what happens to Z-ONE's plans, failure because of Yusei Fudo. Well no more! I've already sent monsters out to eliminate Yusei Fudo and any reinforcements he has and I'll destroy the Ener-D myself!"

Primo glared. "You're talking nonsense Paradox, and your monsters are uncontrollable. That fluctuating power could destroy the entire planet if you fired it into the Ener-D!" he shouted.

"Do you really think you can stop me Primo?" Paradox asked coldly, even as in the background Malefic Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon blasted Ancient Fairy Dragon to the ground. "It's not nonsense, it's truth. Besides your Meklords pale in comparison to the monsters I have taken. With Yusei Fudo and his friend out of the way, no-one can... can..." He trailed off, noticing the familiar glowing blue and red streaks racing towards him. The red was Yusei who accelerated faster and faster as a corona of red-white energy appeared around him. The blue was Yuma, fused into Zexal III and surrounded by the electrical energy of Thunder Spark Dragon. Ahead of them were Stardust Dragon, Red Nova Dragon, Black-Winged Dragon and Number C39: Utopia Ray."No... not again," Paradox snarled.

"Accel Synchro!" Yusei declared and disappeared... only to appear in front of Paradox. Shooting Star Dragon, Red Nova Dragon and Black-Winged Dragon stared down the Malefic Dragons while Yusei, Yuma and Utopia glared at Paradox himself. "It's over Paradox! I don't know what you were trying to pull off with all this, but it's failed!" Yusei stated.

"Give back the cards and stop this. There's no way you can win with these two!" Yuma said.

Paradox hung his head... and then started to laugh. An insane cackling laugh. "Oh rich, I'm being lectured by the so called Synchro Saviour and the being of Chaos!" he shouted. "No, I'm not done! I send Void Ogre Dragon in my Extra Deck to the Graveyard to summon Malefic Void Ogre Dragon!"

"Red Nova Dragon, Shooting Star Dragon, attack!" Yusei ordered. Both dragons aimed at the Galaxy-Eyes monsters.

"Too late Yusei, I have everything I need to open the overlay network!" Paradox declared as he sped off. A sickly purple overlay portal appeared as he did, the three Malefic Dragons being drawn in. Yuma and Yusei blazed after him. "I Xyz summon!" Paradox declared, the portal exploding violently, causing a recently restored building to crumble. "Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon!" He declared. The resulting Xyz monster was different from the rest, the red energy that usually coloured Neo Galaxy-Eyes being replaced with slowly shifting black and white. "And it's effect activates, meaning all your monsters lose their effects and by detaching an overlay unit it gains 100 attack for each monster level on the field." He noted. Consuming one of the units, energy seemed to seep out of Yusei's three monsters, even as Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon's attack shot up from 4500 to 7500. "Attack with Malefic Photon Stream!"Paradox commanded, energy seeming to be ready to burst from the three heads, one aimed at the fast approaching Ener-D area.

"I activate Rank-Up Magic Numeron Force!" Yuma quickly declared, Utopia Ray's black and white changing into blues and reds. "This negates the effects of all other face up cards on the field, and lets me summon Number C39: Utopia Ray Victory!" His warrior swiftly charged towards Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon. "Attack! And using its effect Utopia Ray Victory gains attack equal to your monster's!" he announced as Utopia Ray Victory slashed the Malefic monster thrice, once on each head. No longer able to release the attack, the monster exploded in a blaze of its own energy. "And if my math is right, we've won!" Yuma shouted.

As the smoke cleared, though, it became apparent that it was not over. Paradox was still in flight, although his Duel Runner was certainly worse for wear. Circuitry was exposed in areas, smoke emerging from it... and half of Paradox's face had disintegrated from the blast, revealing the robot underneath. "No. I refuse to lose,"

Paradox stated. "I use the effect of the Malefic Kuriboh in my hand."He explained, a Kuriboh with a white and black mask appearing on his field. "If I am hit with an attack that would normally bring my Life Points down to 0, this card lets me hang on with 1 Life Point by discarding it. In addition, if a monster was destroyed in battle to do this, it returns to the field." Paradox stated as the Malefic Kuriboh burst, revealing an overlay unit-less Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon. "I... I won't let you stop my mission." He said, a card on the top of his deck starting to glow.

"Paradox, it's a pointless mission!" Yusei said. "If we change the past who knows what might happen, all we can do is go towards the future. I've told this to Z-ONE, he's understood!"

"You don't need to throw it all away for this!" Yuma added.

Paradox glared at Yuma. "You. You are the reason I failed last time. Not this time," he stated as the card glowed. Paradox looked down at it and grinned. "Ah yes, what do you call this Yuma? Oh yes!" He stated, drawing the card. "Shining Draw! I play Rank-Up Magic Malefic Force!" He declared. "This lets me take my dragon beyond its limits!" He shouted as a massive dark portal opened, swallowing both Paradox and Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon. Suddenly, with no explosion or fanfare, the head of Malefic Blue-Eyes White Dragon poked out. This was followed by the head of Malefic Rainbow Dragon to its side. Opposite to them were the heads of Malefic Stardust Dragon and Malefic Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon. At the top and in the middle emerged the golden head of Malefic Truth Dragon. As it did, massive claws, one black, one white, also emerged. "Meet Malefic End Dragon!"Paradox declared, the monster's attack displayed at 5000.

"It doesn't look that tough," Yuma noted. One solitary overlay unit, a spectral head of Malefic Neo Galaxy-Eyes Photon Dragon, floated around the monster.

"That's because I haven't used its ability yet," Paradox explained. His voice seemed to echo out of the Malefic Truth Dragon's mouth. "By

consuming one overlay unit, it destroys all monsters on your side of the field and attaches them to it as Equip Magic Cards, gaining their attack, defence and effects." Malefic End Dragon reached out and grabbed the four monsters, the Synchro Monsters in the white hand, Utopia Ray Victory in the black hand. It dragged them into the portal and then... nothing. The arms re-emerged but there was no sign of the monsters even as Malefic End Dragon's attack points shot up to 17,400.

"I activate Combined Bonds!" Yuma declared.

"That's new," Yusei remarked.

"Entirely. I shining drew this card ages ago," Yuma said. "Astral told me to wait for the right time, and we agree that the time is now! Because Utopia was sent to the graveyard, I'm allowed to pick a monster from one of our graveyards with the same attack points and summon it in defence mode." Yuma explained. "And I'm letting Astral decide."

A phantom image of Astral manifested next to Yuma. "But there's only one monster we need in this dire hour. Stardust Dragon!" Astral declared. The white Signer Dragon appeared once more onto the field, crouched into defence mode.

"It won't save you!" The voice of Paradox roared out. "Attack!" Each head, as well as the hands, gathered energy into them.

"Half Unbreak!"Yuma yelled, and barely in time as the energy blasted into Stardust dragon, blasting a hole clear through the clouds behind it. "Yusei, finish it!"

Yusei nodded. He closed his eyes and ignored the roars of Malefic End Dragon. His mind flashed to Akiza, Luna, Leo, Jack, Crow. They all looped, but with destruction this strong, with a monster so powerful, who knew how long it would be until they'd be awake again? And what about other loops with Sect, the Duel Dragons? Malefic End Dragon is powerful and if Paradox stayed alive, he'd be

able to bring it back... that wasn't going to happen. The mark of the dragon disappeared off of his arm, and the arms of the rest of the signers. "I... DRAW!" Yusei declared as the combined mark of the dragon appeared on his back. "I play my Graceful Revival Trap, letting me bring back Balance Shooter!" He stated, the balancing cannon appearing once more. "Next I summon Majestic Dragon!" The pink manifestation of the Crimson Dragon flew onto the field.

"You cannot stop me Yusei!" Malefic End Dragon roared. "Nothing can!" As it declared this, energy gathered in its mouths, the duel almost at the Ener-D area.

"It's time to prove that wrong." Yusei stated. The Duel Runner sped up, Majestic Dragon, Stardust Dragon and Balance Shooter flying alongside it. "I tune Majestic Dragon, Balance Shooter and Stardust Dragon!" He declared, the Synchro and machine monsters turning into stars as Majestic Dragon grew. "Gathering starlights will enlighten a new miracle! Become the path its light shines upon! Synchro Summon! Arrive in light, Majestic Star Dragon!" Yusei declared, light blasting through the sky, parting the clouds around them. "You say I have no chance but you're the one without a chance, as Majestic Star Dragon lets me negate your effects and use them as its own!" A beam of white light blasted out from Majestic Star Dragon as shades of Shooting Star Dragon, Red Nova Dragon, Black Winged Dragon and Utopia Ray Victory entered it, Malefic End Dragon's attack dropping back down to 5000 again. "I use the effect of Red Nova Dragon, meaning my Majestic Star Dragon gains attack equal to the number of tuners in my graveyard times 500, and there are seven!" He declared. Majestic Star Dragon's Attack went from 3800 to 7300. The shades of the other monsters appeared around it. "And just in case your thinking of activating a trap card to save it, Utopia Ray Victory's Effect means that when I attack, spells and traps can't be activated!"

"No... No! I refuse to be DEFEATED!" Malefic End Dragon roared as it fired its energy blasts at the Ener-D Area. Majestic Star Dragon flew in front of the blast.

"Take this! Majestic Star Dragon, Attack!" Yusei announced. Majestic Star dragon flew straight into the energy blast, the beam deflected by its body as Shooting Star Dragon, Red Nova Dragon, Black-Winged Dragon and Utopia Ray Victory charged forward, colliding with one head each and holding the mouth closed.

"Go Yusei!" Yuma shouted. Majestic Star Dragon blazed forward, faster and faster... and then flew straight through Malefic End Dragon. The Black portal had a hole torn into it by the powerful dragon, the five heads separated from it.

"All I wanted was a better future... I'm sorry." Paradox's voice, not Malefic End Dragon's, echoed out, a content smile crossing the Malefic Truth Dragon head as the monster dissolved into sparkles, the robotic skeleton that was Paradox's body falling to the ground, completely and utterly broken.

Yusei sighed, even as he and Yuma slowly landed onto the ground. Yuma just grinned and held out his hand. Yusei blinked... and then smiled softly and shook back. A bond of friendship had been forged in battle. They might not have much time in this loop until Yuma would have to head back-the Airship wasn't far away-but it was enough time to spend with a hard-earned friend in a hard-won battle.

3.2. (Krika)

Leo woke up in his house, looking over his deck. Luna would be in the other room working on her homework, while he'd been putting it off to mess around with his deck. At this point, they could both get straight A's in all of their classes without much effort, but Luna still made the effort to get it done as soon as possible - and usually got him to do that as well. The more free time they had to mess around, the better.

He leaped out of his seat, and made for the door to the living room. As far as they could tell, the two of them looped in unison, which was nice for him - he had heard Yusei have some dark moments

reminiscing about how artificial his friendship with their non-looping counterparts could feel, and he was thankful that neither of them would have to experience that with their twin.

He gave the door a shove, and burst into the room. "Hey, Lunaaa….." He stopped short when he realized that he was talking to….himself.

There was an awkward pause as he stared at his doppelganger, who stared back at him. "Leo? Is that you?" Wow. Hearing his own voice like that was a strange experience. "That's me, yes." His double blinked and bit his lip, in a oddly familiar way. "This….is really weird." He nodded in response. "You can say that agai…." At this point, he glanced at a mirror on the other side of the room, and saw what he looked like for the first time. He took in his pink color clothing, and two pigtails, along with a host of other, horrifyingly familiar details.

It was at this point that the looping memories hit.

Across Neo Domino and Satellite, 4 girls and 2 boys screamed in unison.

3.3.

Kaiba sighed as he slowly entered the conference room. He had been glad to awake about five months before Yugi was due to defeat him in a duel, it had only been a few months since he had taken power over Kaiba Corp and refocused it towards gaming. Within were six specific people: the Big 5, whom he hadn't awoken fast enough to prevent from stripping his power, and Mokuba. The latter placed a large folder on the conference table. Seto could see each of them glaring at him even as he sat down. "Gentlemen. I'm aware that my recent actions have been less than pleasing for you," Seto began as he sat down. "I've been thinking hard on this and have decided that despite my actions you each have valuable experience... so I'm willing to make you an offer."

"Excuse me Mr. Kaiba," Johnson started. "But after the way you treated us, what makes you think we will agree to this?"

Seto smiled. This was a plan he had thought long and hard about. He had to thank some of the others from future loops later on. "Because you'll find each of them is a generous offer," He said. He turned towards Johnson. "For you Johnson, you will be reinstated as head of legal advice. I plan to hire a legal team to protect our products and need an expert to make sure they know what they're doing." He turned towards Gansley and Leichter next. "I'm well aware that you two more than most dislike my move into games from a business stand point. Mokuba?"

"Right Seto." Mokuba clicked a remote, and a projector lit up, showing a rough chart. "What I have here is our research teams surveying the average fiscal earnings of games companies that can capitalize on innovation in comparison to military tech," He explained. "While the earnings are lower you'll find that much less money has to be put back into the materials, meaning we earn more overall."

"And I've already got a partnership being organized," Seto added. "But when we start developing, other companies are going to want to imitate us, and it's always useful to have experienced men such as yourselves to assist me." He was laying on the flattery, but it was the language they spoke. It was also offering them more power over his business, which he knew they would do anything to gain. "He moved on to his next target. Nezbitt, I've arranged for the Duel Tower to have a state of the art laboratory for you and a handpicked team of tech experts to work on. I'm aware you find gaming to be a pointless exploration." He didn't even blink as Nezbitt gulped and stammered. "However I would think that you'd see a greater purpose to the holographic technology."

"Don't you plan to use it just for games, Mr. Kaiba?" Nezbitt asked.

"At first," Seto said, "but once the technology is fine tuned, everyone is going to want access to it. Imagine how many people will be

asking for emitters to map out a body without cutting it open, to display battle maps with real time movements in three dimensions. The technology you can help create may be forming the basis of the future itself." A grin slowly spread across Nezbitt's face.

"Even if your financial ideas are sound Mr. Kaiba, there's absolutely nothing you can say to me to convince me that-," Crump started as the CEO turned towards him.

"Penguin themed areas in every Kaiba Land."

"That this is a bad idea," Crump finished.

Seto smirked, leaning forward. "All this, plus extra vacation time... in exchange for one thing." He paused for a moment before revealing the real purpose of this meeting. "Where is project 'Ark'?"

Seto frowned as he entered the room. This place was clean, far too clean for something recent—Gozaburo had been here. He hadn't entirely been sure of when his adopted father had done the transfer, but fortunately he hadn't been arrogant enough to assume that he hadn't yet. Trailing behind him were Mokuba and Yugi. Really, any of the main awake four would have done. Yugi and Jaden had their odd shadow magic powers, Yuma's power went almost to the point of rewriting reality, and Yusei's technical knowledge was beyond compare. Yugi would do in this case, though. As they advanced further into the room, alarms started to go off.

"Excuse me, but you're trespassing," Noah's voice declared. "I'm not sure how you got here Seto, but I think you might be my key off of this island."

Seto sighed. It was this technology that Pegasus usually coveted when he wanted to bring his wife back, and it was always annoying having to deal with Noah.

"Seto, what is this place? And who is that?" Mokuba asked as he grabbed onto his brother.

"Ah, and there's poor Mokuba, so hidden in your shadow," Noah added before he laughed again.

"And you must be Noah, Gozaburo's actual son," Seto stated calmly. He allowed himself a smirk as Noah's laughing cut off abruptly. "I must admit Gozaburo never mentioned you to us but... Mokuba, say hello to our big brother."

Mokuba gasped at the revelation, but slowly put on a scared little smile. "Um, hello."

At that, one of the bigger monitors flared to life and Noah's head appeared. He seemed surprised himself. "Hello. Father did stop visiting after a while. I always assumed he favoured you over me Seto," Noah commented. "How did you find out about me then?"

"Gozaburo entrusted his security codes to Gansley," Seto deadpanned.

"And what do you plan to do? Shut me down as the last of my father's works?" Noah asked snidely. "That's what your other visitor is for, isn't it?"

"Seto would never do something like that!" Mokuba said fiercely. "I don't know why he brought him but he always has a good reason!"

Noah's digital face recoiled, as if he had been slapped.

"Trust me, Noah, I have nothing of the sort in mind," Seto said. "In fact, I thought I'd give you an offer. Kaiba Corp is about to develop holographic technology, and I was thinking one of the projects could allow those unable to use their bodies to still walk around the real world... in a way. I noticed you in the files and you'd honestly make the perfect candidate for this sort of thing."

"Seto..." Mokuba whispered. "The Big Five aren't going to let you do this, not without selling it at ridiculous prices."

Seto smiled grimly. "Those five are only useful as far as this. They're being fired as soon as I can arrange it—I don't need any of Gozaburo's strategies and war benefits to taint my company," He said flatly.

"Even if I ignored what you just said about father and believed you Seto, how do you plan to transfer me?" Noah asked. "This entire island is set up to keep me going."

"Which is why I'm here," Yugi said, stepping forward. "I have the ability to transfer your consciousness from here to another mainframe that Seto has set up on the mainland. As for the technology..."

"I'm already working on the technology to enhance the sensation of a popular game," Seto continued. "All I'd need to do is combine that completed technology with your virtual reality technology and you'd be walking around in the real world again." It wasn't entirely the truth, as some of the power would be from magic, if only to give Noah the sense of touch, taste and such. "I have no reason to be against you, and it benefits me and my company as much as it does you."

The room was silent for a moment... and then Noah sighed. "Alright then, I'll take the cha-a-a-" His sentence was cut off abruptly and his head was replaced with that of a frighteningly familiar man. Noah's head appeared on another monitor as he activated it. "Father, what are you doing!"

"You ingrate!" Gozaburo bellowed. "You were about to leave with them and leave me behind."

"And this is why I took over. Can't say it's good to see you Gozaburo," Seto said. He noticed that in a flash of golden light Yugi had switched with Atem and shadows gathered around them.

"Likewise Seto. And scared, traitor Mokuba," Gozaburo growled out.

Mokuba squared his shoulders and glared up at the face of his adopted father. "I don't care even if it is you Gozaburo," he said bravely. "You have no power here!"

"And your presence is part of the reason I'm here," Atem said. "Gozaburo... how would you like to play a game, with yours and Noah's fate on the line?"

Gozaburo smirked. "If I win, I'm free?"

"And if you lose, Noah is free," Seto replied. "We've already sorted the game," He added, bringing out a chess board and putting it down on the console.

Gozaburo laughed. "Ah, you think you can beat me at my own game again Seto? You must be delusional," He commented.

"To make sure neither of you cheat, I will keep track," Atem stated, taking the chess board. "Shadow Game... begin!"

Seto simply smiled as he looked at the front page. Him, Mokuba and Noah stood side by side in the picture, with a holographic transmitter projecting Noah. Right now he sat in a luxury lounge, Yugi and Wheeler had been invited around and were sitting in their own chairs, if only because certain events require a celebration... and they were the closest he had to friends.

Not that he'd ever admit that he respected Wheeler enough for that.

"Yugi... I don't know how better to say this, but thank you," Seto said. "You've let me give Noah another chance."

"Geez rich boy, didn't know you could get so sappy," Joey teased. "But yeah, real nice thing you guys did. Both of ya."

"Shut it mutt."

Yugi grinned. "Oh, I did it for more than just Kaiba, that was just a bonus." He admitted. "This sort of technology is going to be useful in Neo Domino after all."

Seto and Joey blinked for a moment, and both laughed. "So your eagerness to get this done so soon isn't to help me out, but to mess with Fudo?" Seto asked.

Yugi shook his head. "I wouldn't exactly put it that way," he said.

"But you want to see how Yusei reacts when one of the others is a hologram," Joey concluded. "That Luna girl, right?"

Yugi just grinned, before the three laughed once more.

3.4.

Alexis grinned even as she pirouetted for the crowd, drawing. She had only recently started awakening but once she had she soon had realized something: She was out of practice. Any duels she had were either the same as the prime loop (and thus tended to be a win for her) or had an embarrassingly high amount of losses. She had talked to Jaden about it and he had suggested:

"Why don't you just focus on the good parts? You're a great duelist Alexis, it's just you put too many things in."

And while taking advice from Jaden of all people sounded slightly dim, she had seen the look in his eyes. The same no nonsense look of the man who would fight against Gods to save the world. Who would take down an entire cult to get his friends back. Who would plunge himself back into the darkness of a world of monsters to make sure no man was left behind. Her Jaden.

Right now she was taking on Aster, who was putting on an exhibition match. Destiny Hero Dreadmaster was out on the field, along with Captain Tenacious, Diamond Dude and Fear Monger, meaning it had a total of 3400 attack points. "I hope that you didn't just use your best card there Miss Rhodes," Aster commented. "Even if you are dressed the part of a Pro Duelist you still need to show that you have skills like one."

And that would be Atticus's stupid idea. Her brother was looping too and had provided the stupid ukulele music throughout this entire match. His idea was to dress her up in a cosplay outfit of Cyber Blader, and she had to admit it was useful to get her in the spirit of things. "Don't worry, I'm about to show you just why I'm Queen of Obelisk Blue," She replied. With her life points at 400 and Aster still at 4000 she planned to prove it too with a OTK. "First, I play Polymerization, fusing my Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater into Cyber Blader!" She declared. She span in place as a spotlight lit up and Cyber Blader skated out of the fusion portal. "And now for the next step in our routine, I play Monster Reborn to bring back my Cyber Angel Dakini!" As Alexis said this the Cyber Angel monster leaped from the graveyard and straight towards Aster.

"Wait a second, does Cyber Angel Dakini still get her special ability when brought back from the graveyard?" Aster asked.

Alexis grinned as he started to sweat. "Exactly, and Dakini is destroying Destiny Hero Diamond Dude," She explained. Dakini tossed one of her polearms forward and impaled Diamond Dude on it, who simply groaned as he dissolved into dust. "And now, the routine itself as Dakini will attack your Destiny Hero Fear Monger!" Alexis copied Dakini as she pulled her polearm from Diamond Dude's spot. The two twirled, the weapon outstretched as Fear Monger was bisected. "Because your monsters are down to two, that means Cyber Blader has double her attack points." Alexis noted, even as Aster's Life Points fell to 2600. "Attack!"

Cyber Blader nodded and skated forwards. An ice path manifested before it as it skated towards Captain Tenacious.

"I don't think so! I play my D-Counter, which will destroy your Cyber Blader!" Aster said. And if she activates De-Fusion to try and stop it, then I'll counter with my Call of the Haunted, bringing back my Destiny Hero Diamond Dude. From there, Fear Monger will bring back Tenacious and I can summon out Dogma, winning this duel in style, He thought.

Alexis smirked. "Predictable. I play Angel Blast which negates her destruction!" She announced. Aster's eyes widened as he, and the crowd, realized exactly what Alexis had planned. From the start of this duel, she had one strategy in mind. A strategy pulled off as Cyber Blader cut down Tenacious. "One turn kill," Alexis said.

Silence. And then one student clapped, followed by a couple more, Jaden, Atticus and Chazz most likely. And then suddenly applause, students clapping and cheering so loudly that she almost missed Aster slowly walking up to her. "Great duel," Aster said as he grinned. "Look, when you decide to go pro, give me a call. You've got major potential—not many pros can say that they beat my Destiny Heroes."

Alexis simply grinned at that. Her practice was all worth it, if only for the fact that she knew for sure now that she was still the skilled duelist she was before. She was worthy of her title of the Queen of the Obelisk Blue dorm.

"Alright! A song of victory for my baby sister!" Atticus cried out. "Oh-." And that was as far as he managed to get as one of Alexis's fake blades smacked into his head and knocked him out. Her practice hadn't been entirely in dueling...

3.5.

Yugi growled as he looked at the boy opposite him. He had heard of Faker, of Vector and of Heartland, how they were Yuma's big bad guys. Nothing he and the Pharaoh couldn't sort out, especially as Don Thousand sounded like a second rate Zorc half the time.

But one who had been barely touched was Cameron Clix. The Number cards were still Astral's memories interestingly enough, and while he had heard stories from the others about looping with and without Atem in his loop, having a different partner in Astral was odder than simply lacking Atem.

"You're sick Cameron, and I'm going to stop you." Yugi said. "No-one should want to cause disasters, injury and death simply for a 'scoop'."

Cameron sneered. The boy reminded Yugi way too much of Bakura at times, and the voice didn't help. "If you want to stop it Yugi, put your Number card on the line. Or are you afraid I'll beat you?"

Yugi glared. Even as he did Astral manifested beside him. "I assume you have something in mind other than a duel for Cameron?" Astral asked.

"Sorta. Can the key channel shadow magic?" Yugi muttered under his breath.

Astral frowned. "I've never tried. It doesn't tend to react well to foreign energy though."

"Right... then I have a different plan," Yugi said. "Let's duel Cameron!"

Cameron smirked as his duel disk started to flash. "Yes, but let's just see how I'm going to beat you." He said as he pulled out the photos. "Oh? It seems this will end on turn 5, with your Number 39: Silent Guardian defeated!"

"No matter what, turn 5 always seems to be his prediction," Astral noted. "It was my hundredth observation."

"Well with us together, we have our own winning formula," Yugi replied. "It's time to duel!

It was already turn 5 and despite using a strategy involving Gagaga Gardna things were looking dicey for Yugi. On Cameron's side he had already summoned Number 25: Force Focus. "Turn 5 Yugi. I know you have things prepared to summon your Number, so do it!" Cameron cackled out.

"Oh, I do, but I have a much better strategy in mind," Yugi replied.

"What? Tell me!" Cameron demanded.

"How about I show you instead? I play Monster Reborn," Yugi announced. "Which lets me bring back my Gagaga Magician that I sent to defend my Gardna earlier!" a portal with purple spell writing opened up and Gagaga Magician leapt out. "And then I play Gagaga Kid, special summoning it with his effect!" Yugi added as the small child Gagaga joined his superior. The portal stayed open. "But they aren't going to be on the field for long, because I sacrifice both my monsters to summon the mighty Grandora, Dragon of Destruction!" With that announcement a shadowed jaw rose out of the portal and sucked. Gagaga Magician and Kid turned into energy and were absorbed by the shadow as it pushed its way out. The shadow gained color and solidity as the intimidating dragon roared. "Normally a Number can't defeat another number, but I'm willing to bet that if I use its effect, your monster will die like any of them."

Cameron growled. "Not if I use Force Focus' special ability!" He declared as the camera absorbed a unit and blasted Grandora with a ray of light. This scattered it back into shadows, although it remained on the field with no attack or defence. "It's useless!"

Yugi smirked. "Actually, you just fell into my trap. Go, Gagaga Revenge!" Yugi announced. As he played the spell card the portal opened again and Gagaga Magician pulled his way out. "And using my Magician's Effect, I increase his level from 4 to 8. Which lets me do this," Yugi added as his two dark monsters turned into purple light.

"Level 8? But Silent Guardian is a Rank 4 monster," Cameron said.

"Who said anything about Silent Guardian?" Yugi countered "I overlay my level 8 Grandora and Gagaga Magician to build the overlay network and Xyz summon!" With that declaration the galactic summon portal exploded outwards. "Xyz Summon! Lord of the dead and forgotten toys, towering over them, Number 22: Zombiestein!"

As Yugi announced the summon a shadow grew over him, Force Focus and eventually Cameron who stumbled back at the sight. "N-no way..." Cameron muttered. The smoke cleared, revealing the cloaked giant that is Zombiestein. Zombiestein looked down at Yugi who gave him a thumb up. He replied in turn.

"And because of Gagaga Revenge my pal here gains an extra 300 attack points," Yugi added as Zombistein's already impressive 4500 attack increased to 4800 as the hulking monster gained a warm glow. "And I'm making sure your sick game ends here. Go Oni-Gami Combo!" Yugi commanded, revealing the last part of his deadly strategy as the magic card showed itself and its picture: Gem Knight Pearl rapidly attacking something. "This lets me send all my overlay units to the Graveyard and in exchange... Zombiestein attacks twice." Yugi noted, even as the overlay units were absorbed into Zombistein's fists. "Zombiestein! Attack!"

Zombistein walked forward and grabbed Force Focus in one hand. He proceeded to close his hand and crush the Number. Even as Cameron's life points dropped from the attack Zombiestein tossed the wreckage at Cameron. This not only forced Cameron to the ground but finished the duel as Cameron's life points dropped to 0. With a final thumbs up Zombiestein disappeared.

"Interesting move." Astral noted as he reached forward to reabsorb Force Focus. "And done fast enough that the blimp can still right itself. But how did you know he would stop Grandora?"

Yugi grinned. "He wanted to take down my monster with his." Yugi said. "I know a guy just like that, it's easy to goad them after a while." He said. And for once he did that. Number 22 had a strong bond to him, perhaps it was his Number?

3.6. (Krika):

Yusei twisted a gauntlet-like device in his hands, running over his memories of building it in this loop. It was a bright, sleek red that could attach to his arm, with a projector-like device on the end that would be near his wrist, while along the edge were three slots for cylinder plugs. Two such plugs were on the table next to him, the bronze-colored metal unmarked.

According to his memories, this device was called a Capsule Shooter, and served a similar purpose to the Duel Disks that he was more familiar with. There were a couple of differences, mostly in that battles were closer to arena combat, as the broadcast of Jack (here called the "Arena King") showed. The monsters were also different - he'd have to find Luna to ask for more information, but it seemed like Duel Spirits lived in this dimension as wandering monsters that seemed to live on the edges of society. Satellite was full of them, especially near the BAD area, so the residents seemed somewhat hardier than they normally were. He wasn't exactly unfit himself most of the time, but in this loop he was pretty much in peak condition; Team Satisfaction battles were much more intensive when actual battles were involved. Still, the fact that Jack's monsters seemed to be Dark Highlander, Sirius the Blue Dog Star, and Jeweled Red Dragon Archfiend promised interesting things, as did the signal that Jack had given - the signal that they had set up to broadcast that he was Awake.

"Hey, Yusei!" He turned to see Rally running in, followed by the Turbo Cannon that his loop memories had informed him the child had befriended some time ago. He was holding what looked like the remains of a silvery gauntlet. "I found a Shooter with a complete capsule interface!" With an internal sigh, Yusei picked up the gauntlet, looking it over. It wasn't necessary, as he'd been able to fix up the relevant part with ease once the loop started, but it meant that he'd have to go through this all over again.

With a nod and thanks, he accepted the ruined Shooter from Rally and placed it on his table, beginning to extract the relevant part to keep up appearances. After the boy had left, he strapped the red Shooter onto his arm, and concentrated. Underneath his arm, the red glow of a Signer Mark (the Head, his true Mark) appeared, and with a force of effort, he reached into a pocket of subspace and pulled out a card. Glancing at the device on his arm, he noted that his Signer Mark had apparently been traced onto it in silver. Activating the Shooter, he focused an effort of will onto the card, and it burst into a brilliant glow which curved around into the entrance of the device. It trembled with the energy flowing through it, the emblem of the Dragon Head on it glowing red, until all the energy suddenly faded and from out of the other end popped a bronze canister like the other two that were on the desk. Yusei examined it for a moment, checking for any imperfections before slotting all three into the ports on his Shooter.

A moment later, he saw out of the corner of his eye the brilliant glow of the Security spotlights shining down into their underground home. Ambling out, he listened to the announcement by Trudge, the usual "Surrender now, Satellite Scum!" deal. Usually at this point he'd have started speeding off on his D-Wheel, but here he had a different idea planned. He waited for Trudge to finish, and then walked into the centre of the light, and grinned up at the heavy-set police officer.

"Hello again, Trudge." The officer glared down at him, resentment in his eyes. "Yusei Fudo. You aren't going to get away this time." Yusei's grin widened. "Well, I'm not planning on running away from you now." "Planning on giving yourself up?" "No, I have an idea that I think you might like." He raised the arm bearing his Capsule Shooter. "I challenge you to single combat. You win and you can take in both me and Rally. I win, and we get a day's head-start." Trudge guffawed, before getting himself under control.

"You think I would agree to single combat with a piece of Satellite Scum such as yourself?"

Yusei nodded, and the grin turned into a smirk. "Yes, unless you're scared of facing me? Maybe you think you aren't strong enough?"

As usual, Trudge's face was a lovely image of fury, and he growled at the officers behind him. "Alright you lot, back off!" A few of the more junior officers objected and were shouted down. As Yusei climbed up to ground level, he reflected on how much of a leader Trudge could actually be - his promotion to Secondary Special Investigations Chief was proof of that, although the stories that Yugi had told about how he was in school (he'd been surprised to realize that Trudge was quite that old) and his overbearing control over the officers under his command here showed another side.

As he pulled himself up, he faced Trudge, who was standing on the other side of the crack in the road. The rest of the dozen or so officers had stepped back, leaving a circle about 40 feet wide that the two stood in. Trudge had attached a silvery-grey gauntlet to his arm, emblazoned with the symbol of Sector Security. The two stared at each other, before raising their Capsule Shooters and activating them in unison.

"FIRE!"

A bolt of energy emerged from each of the Shooters, resolving into two monsters. In front of Trudge appeared the gun-bearing Assault Dog, while Speed Warrior appeared next to Yusei. A mental direction from the duelists sent the monsters into combat, Assault Dog firing a chain of bullets that Yusei and Speed Warrior both dodged away from, albeit in opposite directions. Speed Warrior raced in an arc around the edge of the ring, evading most of the fire from Trudge's monster.

"Running away, Satellite Scum? That's no way to win a duel!" The only response Yusei gave was a small smile, and Speed Warrior suddenly back-flipped over the line of fire, and sprinted at the dog, blurring into such speed that it looked like it had almost teleported next to the dog. It swung it's leg in a vicious arc that ended in the spot where gun met dog, sending it rolling. Yusei smirked at Trudge,

who was looking as if someone had just kicked him in the gut. "Who's running away?"

"Well, you may have used your monster's special ability, but mine keeps it around a little longer!" The Assault Dog blurred for a moment, before leaping to its paws, and unleashing another barrage at Speed Warrior, who dodged to the side at the last moment. "You can't dodge forever, Yusei!" And true to his words, this time the bullets found their mark, and smashed Speed Warrior into energy. Yusei suddenly felt small bits of pain pepper all over his body, causing him to gasp. Trudge was quick to pick up on that. "If you can't take the pain, Satellite, then just give up now. I'll even go easy on you."

Yusei stretched, and reached for his Shooter. "Not a chance, Trudge. I still have another monster to play!" He touched a button, and fired another bolt of energy out of it, this one resolving into another humanoid robot, this one bigger, and sporting a battered scarf. "Junk Warrior still has my back!" The officer growled, and his monster unleashed another barrage at the new monster. This monster, unlike Speed Warrior, didn't dodge, but tanked the hit, and charged at the dog, brute-forcing into melee range, and smashing it in the face with a punch. The dog was sent flying again, and blurred again, before collapsing into shards.

Yusei raised an eyebrow at Trudge, who glared at him, holding onto his side where the punch and hit through. "You thought I would use Assault Dog's ability one more time, didn't you? Well, too bad, because I'm using what energy it has left, and the energy from my Handcuff Dragon to bring out my ultimate creature!" Energy swirled around his gauntlet, and burst forth, some of the closer officers being forced to steady themselves from the waves of energy that burst forth as a massive three-headed dragon appeared, roaring as it did so.

"You may have taken out my first monster, but I don't think you'll find Montage Dragon to be any easier!" The dragon roared, and the middle head launched a beam of yellow energy at the warrior, who

managed to barely slip aside from the blast, which cracked the concrete where it had impacted.

I can't let one of those attacks hit, or I'll be out a monster... Yusei thought, brow furrowing.

Seeing the expression on his opponent's face, Trudge laughed. "Scared, Satellite Scum? Well, you should be, because I'm not going easy on you anymore!" His dragon roared, and this time the two side heads launched their own blasts, one red and one blue. Unable to dodge completely this time, Junk Warrior took a hit from the blue blast to the side, sending it kneeling to the ground, along with Yusei, who felt his side erupt in pain. "See, there's nothing you can do! Your monster is on the ground, and defenseless!"

The dragon roared, and all three energy blasts struck true, smashing Junk Warrior into bits, and then smashing the bits. Trudge laughed, and grinned at Yusei, before his words died in his throat. Instead of kneeling in pain, Yusei was standing ramrod straight, glaring at Trudge, seemingly unaffected by the hit he should have taken. "Is that all?"

"What is this, Scum? I destroyed your last monster - I defeated you!" Yusei smirked, and shook his head. "You only thought I had two monsters. But I've got something new, you see." "Even so, that attack should have left you unconscious on the ground! How could you have survived?" Yusei gave a little shrug. "Maybe I'm just tougher than you think." Maybe I shouldn't piss him off quite so much, though after actual God cards, the pain really isn't that bad. "In any case, I think I should introduce you to my latest partner!"

He raised his Capsule Shooter to point in the air as the end glowed with energy. Underneath it, he felt his Mark start to glow, responding as shimmering energy blasted out of his Shooter, and spiked into the sky, temporarily lighting up the sky as a new monster formed. This one was a dragon as well, with shimmering silver skin, with sparkling jewels embedded into its body, and elegantly curved spikes on its head. It floated in the sky, held aloft by flaps of its large wings.

"My Stardust Spark Dragon would like to make your acquaintance." Trudge glared at Yusei, before taking a moment to calm himself down until he could vocalize again. "I don't know where you got that new monster, but it will go down just as fast as your other two!" "Well, we'll see, won't we?"

Stardust Spark Dragon gave an echoing cry, and dived at Montage Dragon, who responded by unleashing it's three blasts again, all three intertwining into a massive burst of energy that slammed it's opponent, creating a massive explosion of energy. Trudge chuckled, glaring at Yusei as he steadied himself against the waves of energy. "The bigger they are, the harder they fa-what?" The smoke had cleared to reveal Stardust apparently unharmed, and continuing its dive at Montage Dragon.

"My monster is a bit harder to take down than that. And it's funny you should mention that saying, because while your monster may be able to pack quite the hit, it's sadly lacking in the defense department!" Energy gathered around Stardust Spark Dragon's mouth, before it released a shimmering silver beam of energy that struck Montage Dragon dead center. The three-headed Dragon roared, as did Trudge, before the dragon exploded, and Trudge collapsed onto the ground.

The officers stared, frozen, at the sight of Yusei victorious. The youth, on the other hand, leaped back down into the lower street, and grabbed the motorbike propped up there. It seemed that even in a universe without Turbo Duels, he still gravitated toward motorcycles. He kick-started the bike and sped off. The rest of his friends had long since fled, knowing that sticking around would have been an incredibly silly idea, and it was high time he joined them in that regard. As he sped away, the officers sprang into action, and with shouts and yells moved to help their fallen commanding officer, and to try and organize a futile pursuit for Yusei.

As the youth sped off, he considered what he'd do next. Making it to Neo-Domino wouldn't be that hard, but the options offered by this loop were going to be interesting to explore.

3.7 (The Imaginatrix)

"So you're my father in this loop?" Yugi asked Atem, who was sitting across from him in the tiny living-room.

"Among other things," he replied, exchanging a knowing look with the dark-haired woman beside him—one of the local loopers, if Yugi was not mistaken.

"And I'm basically supposed to complete a magical belt?"

"Yes," the woman responded. "Lief left some notes with me as soon as I started looping in case he was replaced. " She reached into her subspace pocket and pulled out a hefty file.

Yugi thumbed through it, finding not only Lief's extensive notes, but quite a few well-crafted maps. According to the notes attached to these, the young heir had once looped as one of his ancestors, and with his help, a famous explorer had not only been proclaimed a hero, but had lived a long and fulfilling life. The maps had been made in thanks.

"So who's my companion going to be?" Yugi asked when he closed the file.

Atem smirked. "See for yourself."

Yugi turned around to see someone entering the room. Even with his head bowed and the ragged cloak around his shoulders, Yugi recognised him immediately. "Joey!"

The blonde let the cloak fall away and raised his head.

"Could someone please explain why I'm twenty years older than I'm supposed to be?"

The brunette shifted her position on the branch as she examined her loop memories. She had only been awake for a few loops, and this was her first fused one. She started as a raven flew down to perch on a branch above her head.

" You are not Jasmine, " it accused.

The girl shook her head, recognising the bird. He must have been important if he was looping.

"No, Kree, I'm not. My name's Téa."

The raven cocked his head to one side, examining her critically.

" A newcomer, " he said, almost to himself. "I wonder what Lief's replacement will be like."

Téa scanned her memories, but could not find any mention of that name.

"Who are you talking about?" she asked.

Kree made a sound that might have been the raven equivalent of an amused chuckle.

" You will see soon enough. "

Yugi, Joey and Téa had stopped at Tom's shop for supplies. Unlike Jasmine in the base loop, Téa had been quick to inform her friends of the small horde of coins she had pilfered from grey guards before awakening, and they were able to buy more than the original trio had. Yugi had stashed many of their purchases in his subspace pocket (you never knew when a pipe that blew bubbles of light would come in handy), and now they were only waiting for someone else to arrive. Lief had told them in his notes that they should meet up with Doom as soon as possible. However, it was not Doom who entered the shop.

The three of them all stared in shock as an older Seto Kaiba walked through the door, bought a jar of fire beads for a quarter of the price thanks to the mark he drew on the shop counter, then beckoned for them to follow him outside when Tom's back was turned.

"Well, it's about time," he said as soon as they could not be overheard. "Do you have any idea how long I've waited for things to get interesting?"

"You replaced Doom?" Yugi asked, already knowing the answer. The scar running down Kaiba's face marked him clearly.

"According to Zeean, yes," Kaiba said in a slightly bored tone. "I awoke in the Shadow Arena."

"So you don't remember your loop self's past?" Téa asked, looking just a little disappointed.

"Not at first, but the Torans fixed that," Kaiba said with a slight grimace. "Speaking of the Torans," he continued, reaching into a pouch at his belt, "I have some presents for you." He tossed three large jewels in Yugi's direction. Yugi quickly caught them and stared in surprise.

"The diamond, amethyst and lapis-lazuli," he murmured.

"I went to the Valley of the Lost soon after arriving in Deltora. I wasn't as emotionally invested in this place as Doom was so I just took the diamond anyway when I won the Guardian's game. He's looping as well, apparently."

"And the other gems?" Joey prompted.

"I picked the two that wouldn't be missed by the Shadow Lord." He rolled his eyes heavenward as he spoke the name of the villain in this loop.

"Thanks, Kaiba," Yugi said, beaming as he removed the Belt of Deltora and began fitting the gems into their respective medallions—Lief had told him which gems went where in his notes. "Now all we need are the opal and the emerald."

"You owe me for this, you know," Kaiba informed him as he stood up and replaced the belt around his waist.

"What did you have in mind?" Yugi asked, somewhat warily.

"You know you can store the belt in your subspace pocket and use it in other loops."

"Yeah, Lief's notes did mention that," Yugi responded, wondering what his rival was getting at.

"I want the Pirran Pipe."

Loop Notes: 3.1. And this is the first of the big loops. This is a continuation, sorta, of 2.1.

3.2. No plans from the author to continue it. Someone else might.

3.4. Anyone who has played the GX Tag Force games (or used Dakini in any of them) will agree that with the use of revival cards it becomes very powerful fast.

3.5. Utopia is Yuma's Number 39, if someone else replaces him then it's usually different. However like Joey and Crazy Box, little Yugi has more of a bond with the toy linked Zombiestein than he does his 39.

3.6. 5D's Capsule Monsters. I wish I had thought of that.

3.7. Deltora Quest Crossover.

Sorry for the wait on this. Our beta reader was busy doing NaNoWriMo last month, so they had no time for this. Loop 4 should have a shorter wait.

Chapter 4

(So... been a while. The next few chapters are going to have every loop that's been done between now and last time. This includes a few loops that are part of the MLP Loops by Saphroneth and the Mega Loops (as in Mega Man) by Crisis. If you follow those, you may find these a bit old. If you don't... go follow them is all I can suggest. We also have a TV Tropes page for the loops as a whole, The Infinite Loops. Don't expect Loop Notes though.)

(Oh, and lastly, an announcement. Arc-V is NOT eligible for looping yet. It has been agreed that until the first arc is done there isn't enough to go on.)

4.1.

Yuma stretched himself awake and blinked. Manifested next to him was Dark Mist in his humanoid form. Yuma yelled out and scrambled about, inadvertently causing the hammock to twist, dumping him painfully onto the floor.

"It seems I was right, you are so pathetic that you can't even get yourself out of bed right," Dark Mist snidely commented. Even as Yuma started to think of a comeback, he suddenly went still. "What's the matter, too afraid of me now? Pathetic." Dark Mist was surprised as a hand grabbed him and tossed him to the ground. This wasn't the pathetic boy he had entered the contract with. Indeed, that boy had never been able to grab the Number monster.

"Look, Dark Mist, I don't know what stupid contract I entered with you, but I'm changing the details," Yuma said. That look on his face, that glare of determination. It was much like Astral had been when he fought Don Thousand. Even so, Dark Mist growled as he tried to dissolve into goo... only to find that he couldn't.

"There's no way. Yuma doesn't have the power of Chaos... and yet you do," Dark Mist said and smirked. "That should make our destruction of thi—argh!" A crimson aura surrounded the hand that had pinned Dark Mist to the floor. "W-what are you doing boy?"

"I always hated that smug attitude of yours," Yuma growled. "Let's see what changes without Don Thousand!" As he spoke, a shadowed spectre of the Barian flew out. "Shining Draw!" Yuma declared as he tossed a card at the spectre... before he blinked and looked down at what card he had tossed. "One of my copies of V Salamander... what did it turn into?"

Dark Mist smirked as he flowed around Yuma's hand now that his concentration was broken.

"You dropped your guard, you fool! Now..." He started. Then he stopped with his arm half raised. "Wait, what was I thinking? Destroy the world? That just sounds almost like a cliché. Oh, hello Yuma, still looking pathetic as usual."

"You're not surprised that I was able to pin you down?"

"No more than that time you managed to defeat four Chaos Numbers." Dark Mist noted with a smirk.

Yuma's jaw dropped. "You're looping. How?"

"Simple. In this time I absorbed Astral. You two seem to have a connection, and it was only broken by Don Thousand's presence. Although if you think I'm going to let you act like a painfully good person, you have another thing coming."

Yuma shrugged.

"Can't really do that at this point. The me of this loop is... kinda pathetic," He admitted as he picked up the card. "All for a lack of a phrase." He flipped the card around and showed Number 96 what

exactly it was. Rank Up Magic-Barians Force. "So... how about we cause some chaos instead?"

Dark Mist simply grinned.

"So, what are you going to do this loop?"

"With what you have planned? I'm going to be in Barian world with Rio. You'll see us later on."

"Villain loop... I like it. Kite's not awake yet, though, so don't hesitate with him."

"Funny, I was about to say the same, Dark Mist is just as bad as Utopia against him."

"We have a plan."

Yuma glared down Bronk even as he cowered. To fit the theme of the chaos-bringing mayhem-bringer, he had started with the school. Right now He had Aye-Iron on the field equipped with Spring Punch, and had been forced to watch as each of his other monsters had been torn apart by Dark Mist.

"W-what happened to you, Yuma? You're supposed to be pathetic... why aren't you cowering at Spring Punch?" Bronk asked. This only caused Yuma's scowl to deepen as he remembered the fake memories he had gotten when duelling Trey. It seemed that was the reality here.

"I'm still scared... but I want my revenge more," Yuma said darkly. "Dark Mist! Use your effect and gain Aye Iron's Attack points!" Dark Mist's tentacles whipped out and grabbed Aye-Iron, draining it of power slowly. Each and every other duellist, with the exceptions of Cathy (who still had a crush on him), Shark and Tori (who was this reality's Yuma's only friend), had been taken on in a duel and

defeated by Dark Mist. He had flipped flip's strategy, he had purged Caswell's Crashbug and Debugger strategies... and now it was time to make the school plunge into public chaos. He'd make it up to them next loop. "And now atta—"

"That's enough, Yuma!" Yuma halted as even Dark Mist, who had possessed his own card, stopped in mid attack. They both glanced over at the source which was... Tori? "If you want to fight anyone then take on me!" Tori shouted, a familiar glimmer in her eyes. Yuma blinked, then groaned inwardly. Tori had awoken in This loop.

"You stay out of this, Tori. You never mocked me but..." Yuma started.

"Or what?" Tori demanded.

Dark Mist manifested himself beside Yuma.

"She's making it difficult to keep the act up," Dark Mist said. We should run. We've caused enough chaos, and it's what this Yuma would do."

Yuma gave a small nod and ran off in the opposite direction to Tori... only to stop and barely dodge an outstretched claw.

"Apologies, Yuma, but you aren't going anywhere," Cathy said as she stood at the steps, essentially blocking off his access. "This isn't who you are."

Yuma glared.

"And you know who I am?" He asked snidely.

Tori sighed.

"We know you're better than this," she said. "Even if it means we have to work together, Cat and I will snap you out of this."

"And what, I go back to being a coward? No way!" Yuma shouted.

Tori and Cat glanced at one another... then nodded.

"Bronk, cancel your duel with Yuma," Tori ordered. "He's won anyway." Bronk simply nodded, having been paralysed with fear at Dark Mist's power before. The field shattered, even as he pocketed the duel disk. "And Yuma, you can be better than that... you don't need the power of the Number, and we'll prove it," She commented, taking a card out and flipping it over...

"Number 39: Guardian Angel Paradise?" Yuma questioned. The image was that of a warrior angel holding a large bladed shield, the angel being golden in colour and the shield white. Of course, with Dark Mist being the Number someone else would obviously get Number 39... but that meant someone else would get... He turned around and looked at Cathy, a steely glint in her eyes as she showed Number 17: Saber-Toothed Catgirl, a Catgirl in blue chain mail armour with two large, silver fangs jutting out of her mouth. "Number monsters... Dark Mist?"

Dark Mist grinned as he whipped out dark tendrils.

"Looping or not, this is the perfect opportunity!" He shouted. The tendrils sped towards Cathy and Tori, then wrapped around their arms. "This will be a two on one duel, Yuma. We still have the advantage."

"Right, a two on one duel!" Yuma nodded. "And you two will share life points."

"Fine with us," Tori said, tossing her duel disk into the air much like Yuma usually did.

"Yes, it's just puurrfect," Cat agreed.

"Duel Gazer, let's go!" The two girls said in unison as the duel disks deployed.

"I'll go first!" Tori declared even as she drew a card. "And I play the continuous spell card Valhalla, Hall of the Fallen!" At first nothing happened, then the ground itself split open as an ancient hall with a throne at the end rose out. The throne and the statues flanking it manifested behind Tori. "And I'll use its effect, because if I don't have a monster on the field, I can special summon a fairy-type monster from my hand," she said. "Descend, my Shining Angel!" As the monster card was placed on the duel disk, the throne blazed a beacon of light into the air, the clouds parting as the relatively weak Shining Angel descended, a blonde man with four yellow wings and dressed in robes. As he stood next to Tori, he glared not at Yuma but directly at Dark Mist instead, the Fairy seeming to be able to see the Number monster. "And I can then use my Normal Summon to bring out my Little Fairy in attack mode!" A second fairy monster, looking more like a pink haired pixie, fluttered down next to Tori.

"Two monsters, but of different levels?" Dark Mist questioned.

Yuma grimaced. He knew what was coming next.

"Not for long. Little Fairy has an effect."

"And now I use Little Fairy's effect," Tori said. "By sending one card to my graveyard, she gains a level." She pointed out... and as Little Fairy Gained a level, the number 39 Appeared on Tori's forehead... but she shook her head. "No, not yet... you'll be used later," She muttered to herself, before focusing on the duel once more as the number faded. "I build the overlay network and Xyz Summon!" The two fairies turned into twin yellow lights, floating in the air as the familiar red portal of the regular overlay network opened. "Ascend, my Fairy Cheer Girl!" The red portal exploded outwards even as the butterfly winged cheerleading fairy emerged from it, tumbling in the air even while she righted herself. "And by using an overlay unit, she lets me draw a card," Tori added. One of the overlay units buried itself into Fairy Cheer Girl's pom poms, which she started waving about, glittering pieces of light falling down onto the deck even as Tori drew the card. "Finally I play a card face down and end my turn."

"She didn't summon her Number?" Yuma said. "No-one can usually resist it without help."

"Let's not give her the chance to figure a way around it." Dark Mist pointed out. "Draw."

"Right... um... draw!" Yuma said. He glanced into his hand and grinned. No way to summon Dark Storm, but he could pull out Dark Mist now. "I summon my Gagaga Magician!" He declared, the heavily costumed magician simply materializing with little fanfare. "Next, I use his effect to change his Level to 2." Gagaga Magician glanced at Yuma confusedly, before shrugging, the four glowing lights on his belt becoming two. "And because I have a Dark Monster and he's a Gagaga, I can special summon from my hand both Caligo Claw Crow and Gagaga Child, but I can't conduct my Battle Phase this turn," Yuma explained, even as a burst of smoke and dark energy revealed the child dressed in Gagaga clothing and the crow with a single claw on each foot and an oversized head.

"Cat, watch out," Tori said. "He's going to summon it." *But the real question is where is the other Dark Mist? He always tried to show himself, but all I see is Yuma,* She thought to herself. Indeed, the tendrils from earlier had seemed almost like the duel anchors that Vetrix's family and Kite would use, but were most likely Dark Mist's.

"He needs three level two monsters to do it? Interesting," Cathy noted.

"Don't say what I'm going to say!" Yuma shouted as he tried to imitate what he thought his counterpart would do. No point in spoiling the surprise yet, and he wanted to test the girls. "I build the Overlay Network with these three and Xyz summon! Come forth, almighty lord of Darkness," He chanted as the even more familiar Numbers overlay network manifested, the three Dark monsters turning into purple lights and diving down into the network. Dark Mist, who was by now grinning eagerly, floated into the air and dived in after the overlay units. This caused it to pulse before it exploded outwards. "Number 96: Dark Mist!" From the portal emerged the sickly

black/grey blob, which rapidly took on its monstrous form, before it roared at the girls. "Unfortunately, there I have to end my turn."

Cathy simply drew a single card from her deck... and smirked. The number 17 blazed a sickly purple on the back of her hand.

"Oh, this is simply puurrfect. I play my Cat Meeting continuous spell, which means when I have one feline friend normal summoned out, I can have another join in," Cat purred out. "So that means I can summon two Stray Cats!" As she announced this, both monsters, along with a tawny and a white cat, appeared.

"Cat, don't overlay!" Tori shouted. "His Number monster being so weak means that something has to be up!"

"And let you have the satisfaction of winning Yuma? No way," Cathy said with a snort. "Besides, I only need one more card to pull this off. I play Double Summon, which lets me Normal Summon again. And here comes another Stray Cat to play." And with that, a black cat and it's box manifested, the three arranged in a triangle. "And with these three fierce felines I build the overlay network!" Cathy declared as the Stray Cats turned into various shades of orange brown light and floated into the air as the Number Overlay Network appeared once more. The earthen lights plunged into the overlay network which exploded outwards. "Come forth Number 17: Sabre Toothed Catgirl!" And before them stood what looked to be a silver haired cat girl in blue chainmail armour with rather large metal sabre teeth sticking out like oversized fangs. "And with 2000 attack, she has more than enough to take out your Dark Mist!" Cathy added. The armoured catgirl leaped into the air and its fangs shone.

Yuma, momentarily amazed by the monster, shook it off and put on the best panicked face he could.

"Oh man, what do I do, what do I... oh, right... your power, I forgot..." Yuma muttered, even as Dark Mist snatched one of its own overlay units out of mid-air. "Because with this, your monster loses half its attack points to Dark Mist," Yuma pointed out, "using Shadow Gain!"

As he managed to utter this, a purple overlay unit buried its way into Dark Mist's head and black mist blasted from the monstrous Number's mouth, even as it reached 1100 attack points to Sabre Toothed Catgirl's new 1000 attack.

"If you think that scares me, wait until you see what claws this cat has! By using up an Overlay unit, Sabre Toothed Catgirl can't be destroyed this turn even by Number cards!" Cathy retorted, and even as black tendrils shot out, Sabre Toothed Catgirl thrust the teeth forwards like a shield. Most of the tendrils simply bounced off of the armour, even as one collided with the teeth themselves and ricocheted over to Cat, knocking her back as her life points reduced by 100. "And if that's the case, I equip my Catnip Turbine to Sabre Toothed Catgirl to give her some more power... even if she can't attack your Number again." She grumbled out, even as Sabre Toothed Catgirl's attack points reached 2200. "And I end my turn."

"I-I-I'm not scared!" Yuma shouted. "Draw..." He trailed off as he eyed what he had drawn. Rank-Up-Magic Barians Force. As much as he hated to admit it, the most strategic move was to play it. "I hope this isn't too much. I play Rank-Up-Magic Barians Force!" Yuma said. Even as the magic card manifested, a flare of crimson light shot up into the air.

"It's good to have you back, Nasch," Dumon admitted to the purple Barian. They walked down the pathway towards Nasch's door, the one with his emblem on it. "We've kept Number 101 safe for you," he added. Not that there was much to do in the Barian world unless you were like Alito and fancied punching volcanos. Speaking of which, the red Barian stood guard at the gate.

"Dumon? Is it time for me to switch... shifts..." Alito asked before he trailed off. "By the emblems... Nasch! " Alito shouted joyously. "We thought you were-"

"Dead, I know. Dumon's already gone through this with me." Nash pointed out.

"Indeed." Dumon noted, not willing to admit just how he had reacted. Nasch personally planned to use it as blackmail when Dumon was awake. "Anyway, we are here to-"

The rest of Dumon's sentence was cut off as a red light shot towards the gates, which opened... and then blasted out a red white light back from whence it came. "Someone is performing a Chaos Xyz Evolution... who's on Earth?" Nasch asked.

"Vector, but he didn't bring any copies of Barians Force with him." Dumon noted.

"Then if a human somehow has one... heh... it could be a good honest fight." Alito admitted... then shivered at the glare he swiftly got from Dumon. "B-but also bad if the humans have managed to figure out how to use our rank ups!"

Nasch, on the other hand, just watched the retreating trail of light.

Yuma... what are you doing?

Reddish light struck the Barians Force Card, even as a new overlay network appeared in the sky and dragged Dark Mist back in.

"I'm going to use the special power I was given... maybe I can stop being afraid with this... Chaos Xyz Evolution! Please decide for me, Chaos Number 96: Dark Storm!" Yuma declared, even as the rotating green particles of the chaos overlay network descended... and exploded outwards. In the place of the humanoid dark mist was the monstrous dark dragon of Dark Storm, who roared out. As he did, one of Sabre Toothed Catgirl's overlay units flew towards the monster and transformed into a chaos overlay unit. "As part of Barians Force, Dark Storm can take one of your overlay units."

"Chaos Xyz..." Cat whispered. She glanced at Tori who nodded.

"And he's going to take out your cat. Because now Dark Storm doesn't take half of your monster's attack, he takes all of it," Yuma said, even as black mist shot out of Dark Storm's maw as its own attack increased from 1000 to 3200. Dark Storm breathed a stream of dark fire at Sabre Toothed Catgirl which absorbed the overlay unit. Even so the dark fire blasted Cathy back and off her feet.

"Urgh... you won't win... I can still fight, and I will save you from yourself, Yuma," Cathy groaned as she slowly pulled herself up.

Yuma shook his head. "Even if I wanted you to, you couldn't. Dark Storm reflects any battle damage I take back at you, and you two are down to 700 life points," He pointed out. "You should give up, it'd be easier for you."

"And who says we want it easy?" Tori shouted. "Even if life gets us down, we'll pull ourselves back up! "

Cathy nodded. "Even if you knock us down, we'll get back up and high five the sky!" She added.

"That's nonsense!" Yuma shouted. "And I'll prove it, I end my turn. I don't even need a face down with Dark Storm out."

"You'll see how wrong you are soon, Yuma. I draw and activate Fairy Cheer Girl's effect to draw again," Tori said, and the golden dust manifested another card. "Now I play Monster Reborn! To bring back my Shining Angel, who then has his buddy Nova Summoner join him." Shining Angel rose up from out of the graveyard even as Nova Summoner, an odd wreath like angel, descended from above.

"And now, thanks to my cats..." Cathy started.

"And my fairies..." Tori continued.

"We're set up to really feel the flow!" The two declared together as another number overlay network appeared above Tori's side of the field.

"I overlay my Summoner and Shining Angel in order to build the overlay network again," Tori explained, the two yellow lights pushing their way into the portal... but instead of exploding, the portal cleared, showing a realm of light that a large golden shield descended from. "Let's win this, Number 39: Guardian Angel Paradise!" Tori shouted. Her number blazed brightly as it folded and expanded, before revealing itself to be an entirely armoured angel, even the wings armoured, almost entirely golden with a glowing white shield.

"It's only got 2000 attack... you can't beat Dark Storm with that. I'll find a way to win next turn!" Yuma insisted... although he barely stopped himself from grinning. Tori had a plan.

Tori smirked. "You aren't getting a next turn, Yuma. I play a classic card, Graverobber!" She said, the trap card flipping up as the mischievous imp appeared, a card in his hand. "And that sounds like the perfect excuse to use your ace card! Go Rank-Up-Magic Barians Force!" She shouted at last, the Barian Emblem threatening to place on her head... before the number 39 blazed brighter, causing it to shatter. All the while, Fairy Cheer Girl rose into the air, into the chaos overlay network... and quickly descended, even as one of Dark Storm's overlay units flew into the network. "Chaos Xyz Evolution! Dark Fairy Cheer Girl!" And indeed the dark fairy, a rod having replaced it's pom pom, had appeared out of the network and two chaos overlay units floated in front of it.

Yuma frowned. "Tori... that still can't beat me, even if you used my own card," He pointed out. "It's-"

"It's far from hopeless, Dark Fairy Cheer Girl, attack Dark Storm!" Tori shouted.

Yuma raised an eyebrow. Dark Storm had enough attack so that would lose them the duel anyway. "Dark Storm, counter attack!" He declared, Dark Storm gathering the dark flames... and then he noticed Tori was smirking. "Oh no... Number 39 has an effect doesn't it?"

"Yep. When two monsters battle, I can use an overlay unit once per turn to have my opponent's effects negated until the end of the battle." Tori stated. "Go Heavenly Scan!" Guardian Angel Paradise floated into the air and it's shield blasted out a ray of light. It struck Dark Storm head on and it's dark fire dissipated. "That includes it being destroyed by Number monsters. Dark Fairy Cheer Girl, attack it with Fairy's Fury!"

Dark Fairy Cheer Girl grinned, a ray of purplish magic blasting out of her wand and striking Dark Storm head on. Dark Storm roared in defiance, as if trying to argue against its own destruction... but eventually exploded. the explosion knocked Yuma back as well as deducting 1500 life points.

"Then I can use an overlay unit to continue the routine and inflict 500 damage for each card in my hand, and I have three!" Tori added as Dark Fairy Cheer Girl waved her wand. Three balls of dark energy flew out of her wand and struck Yuma.

"No!" Yuma shouted. "Dark Mist... his power makes me invincible!"

Tori blinked... then frowned. "Oh, just for that I'm not apologizing for this. Paradise, finish it with Falling Sun Blast!" She announced. Paradise floated into the air again, it's wings outstretched and gathered light. Then, without warning, light blasted out from both at once, striking Yuma head on, reducing his life points to 0. "Yuma..." Tori grumbled, even as the alternate reality world started to dissipate. At this point only the three were around.

"Uh Tori... what are you so mad at him for? We won, right?" Cathy asked.

Tori sighed. "Usually I'd agree... but that last bit of over dramatic ACTING," she said , making sure she glared at Yuma on that last word, "and the lack of the actual thing means that we aren't the only ones repeating... isn't that right, Yuma?" She asked, her tone sickly sweet even as she dragged Yuma up by the ear.

"Ack! Not the ear! I'll talk, just let go of the ear!" Yuma shouted... even as Astral manifested before the three. This was a genuine surprise, even as he gripped the now purified Number 96 card in his hand with a smirk. "Oh... so you were still alive, Astral... didn't doubt you for a second."

"I'm not helping you out of this if that's what you're asking."

"Oh come on, how was I supposed to know!" Yuma whined... before he was tugged on the ear again. "Fine, fine... Tori, Cat, welcome to the loops," he muttered as he reached behind him... he was sure he had those pamphlets somewhere.

"Two blasts of energy. Two potential humans having Chaos Xyz." Dumon muttered. "This is bad, not good, this could seriously..." He trailed off, seeing Nasch had raised his hand. "Yes, Nasch?"

"How about we just go get a drink together after I get my Number and pretend this didn't happen... or blame it on Vector if we don't," Nasch suggested.

Alito nodded. "I like that plan. Plus, it's no worry, the humans are amateurs, we are the true masters of Rank-Up," He stated while causing a certain Astral World denizen to feel insulted.

Dumon sighed "Fine... it's too much of a headache anyway." He stated as he reached in and tossed out Nasch's Cards, then stomped off with Alito behind him.

"Like I said, don't worry," Alito insisted. "They can't even win in normal fights."

"Note to self, teach Yuma how to fight purely to see the reaction," Nasch muttered to himself.

4.2.

Syrus knocked on one of the dorm's lower doors. Given how empty the Slifer dorm got to be after the first year, he wasn't surprised that Jaden was in another of the rooms... but he had absolutely no idea what he was doing. After all, Syrus hadn't been awake for that many loops yet.

"Come in!" Jaden shouted. Syrus opened the door... and saw stairs. With a sigh, he slowly descended them... and stopped to let his jaw hit the floor. At the bottom of the steps was a hanger. There were computers and pieces of metal scattered around, and a large metal frame in the centre. Jaden stopped in the process of welding something onto the frame. "Hey Syrus!"

"Jay... firstly, you missed class. I know it's boring on repeats but still," Syrus stated. "And secondly, what in the name of the Egyptian Gods is that?"

Jaden grinned as he continued the welding. "I'm building a giant robot."

"Why?"

"Why shouldn't I build a giant robot? I've got the pocket thing down," Jaden replied. "Better question, 'by the Egyptian Gods'?"

Syrus chuckled nervously.

"Well, I don't have power like you do, and there are only so many gods there. Slifer, Ra and Obelisk are the ones that have a direct influence on us," He noted.

"What about swearing to darkness?"

"That makes me sound like Zane in his evil phase or like I worship the Sacred Beasts. No thanks."

"Fair enough," Jaden said, even as he carried on with his work.

Syrus looked over his friend's project for a long moment. "You know, I might not be an expert like Bastion, but even I can tell if you keep welding it like that, the outer shell will fall apart when you try moving," He observed.

Jaden raised an eyebrow... then slapped himself. "Of course, you and Zane are Cyber Style users, of course you know a little about machines."

"Yeah... but let me help you out," Syrus offered. He leaped down, a wrench in hand, the two best friends working together once more.

Trueman smirked as his many clones surrounded the small blue haired boy. They had cornered him in, irony of ironies, the Slifer Red dorm. "Give up, you will be eliminated so this world can return to our Master's design," He stated.

Syrus tapped his chin. "Hmmmm... let me think... no, I don't think so," he said. "Have you wondered why I brought you here?" Before they could reply, Syrus shouted. "JADEN-OH!"

Suddenly the dorm actually moved backwards... and a giant robot that looked pretty much like Jaden Yuki clambered out. Not for the first time, Trueman cursed the boy.

4.3 (Jcogginsa)

"I don't know whether to hate this loop or love it," Yugi said to Atem. Both were awake for this loop, but they didn't share a body as they usually did. Then again, it was fused.

"Personally I love it!" Atem replied.

"Yeah, well you aren't Mewgi!"

4.4

Yusei blinked as he awoke... and looked around. He was leaving a factory, wearing a leather outfit, and it was definitely not a Neo Domino level factory. He waved goodbye to the workers as he stepped out... with them replying, "Have a good day Sato!"

As he walked a short distance away from the factory, Yusei frowned. "Sato... that's a new one. I'm not waiting on the memories to hit, though," he muttered, closing his eyes and emptying his mind. He visualized himself on his runner, the air rushing past him and whipping through his hair, narrowly dodging a bolt of energy blasted out from one of the Timelords. 'Clear Mind!' A burst of air moved around him, as if the speed of that very moment had been briefly recreated where he was standing. He had wanted to try this out for a few loops now, but had rarely seen the need to. Either way, it had helped to trigger the memories sooner. He was Yusei Sato, the only child of Hiroshi Sato and heir to Future Industries which sold... cars. Yusei shook his head and frowned. While this was all well and good, it was painfully obvious that this was a fused loop.

'At least my... father gives me something useful to get around in.' He noted as he put on a helmet much like the one he had at home, just with added goggles. His ride, on the other hand, was something completely different, reminding him more of the Machine Day Breaker of Team Taiyo, but painted black and with a cover on the front wheel, apparently a piece of engineering Yusei had made himself from the cars (Satomobiles, he corrected himself), apparently naming it the Satocycle.

He hopped on and rode off into the city. He knew about as much as his counterpart did about it, that it was named Republic City, that it was a place of bright opportunities, but had a darker underside in the gangs that roamed it. Some people could bend the elements themselves, but he wasn't one of them. In many ways, it was like Neo Domino, only about a hundred years in the past and with bending replacing duelling and … why was that girl stepping out into the middle of the road?

The Satocycle screeched to a halt, barely stopping in time to avoid hitting the dark-haired young lady. "Hey, watch where you're going!" she yelled, glaring at him.

"Sorry, I should've been keeping my eye on the road," Yusei admitted as he took his helmet off. "Are you ok?" The girl blushed as she looked at him... and then a name flew into his head. "Wait, aren't you Mako of the Fire Ferrets?"

"Uh, yeah..." Mako admitted, slowly rubbing the back of her neck with a small grin on her face. "And you?"

Yusei grinned. It almost felt like being a kid again to be this excited, and he was going to enjoy it for as long as it lasted. "Yusei, I'm a big fan... I need to make it up to you for almost hitting you, I really should know better than to be driving." He insisted. "Tell you what, it would be an honor if I could treat you to dinner tonight. Kwong's Cuisine at 7pm."

"Kwong's? Are you sure?" Mako asked. "It's just so expensive... and I don't have anything to wear for it." Her statement made Yusei notice that, unlike his leather driving suit, which seemed brand new, Mako's outfit looked warn, and apart from the red scarf around her neck, was a uniform beige.

"It's the least I can do. And don't worry about clothing. I have just the thing in mind," Yusei replied as he started up the bike again. "Remember, Kwong's, 7 tonight! Don't worry about a thing!" He shouted as he drove off. Excitement rushed through his body. This wasnew, to be a fan that was well off, but at the same time able to treat one of his favourite stars... the last time he had felt like this was meeting Yugi, and even then, that had been dulled by Paradox being the focus.

He could feel it, this was going to be a good loop.

Yusei sighed as Mako approached. While he didn't always use it, over the years of being exposed to people with Feel, as well as other emotional based powers, he found it easier and easier to read their body language. She was clearly stressed about something or another... and it didn't take a genius to figure out why. "Any trouble with the dress I arranged?" He asked.

Mako glared at him... but sighed. "No... it's just... I'm not big on that sort of stuff, you know?" She replied. Yes, definite stress, tired... a waiter came up and took their orders, and then silence... awkward, awkward silence. "You didn't have to go to this much trouble for me." Mako insisted

"I've always been fond of the Fire Ferrets. being able to treat one of them to dinner is a fun idea honestly," Yusei said. "I am looking forward to seeing you fight in the bending tournaments... but doesn't it cost money for all of that equipment?" Bingo, she froze up a bit at that. "If I had to guess, you don't have enough... but you work to try and make up for it. I admire that." He smiled at her. Akiza had complained on occasion at him for doing this, but having been in a similar situation before, he could empathize.

She gaped a bit before blinking. "That's... exactly it." She admitted, blushing. "How could you...?"

Yusei shook his head. "Don't be embarrassed, I've always been able to read people a little better than I should... whenever my parents were trying to hide a gift for me they had to wear masks to avoid giving it away." He chuckled. It was a treasured loop memory, before his mother of this loop had died... and Mr. Sato never seemed the same. He noticed that Mako had looked away... and the expression on her face was all too familiar. He had seen it thousands of times in the Satellite. "I'm sorry... I didn't realize..."

"It's not your fault." Mako cut off, a look of determination on her face. "But yeah, don't worry, we'll sort it out and keep Pro-Bending." Even as she said it Yusei knew she was lying to herself. She had no idea of what to do.

"Have you ever considered sponsorship?" Yusei asked.

"Who'd sponsor us?" Mako pointed out. The waiter walked towards the table, a large silver tray in his hand.

"Your meals for you and your guest, Mr. Sato," the waiter said after a distasteful glance at Mako. Even as he placed it down Mako's head had whipped around, utterly shocked.

Yusei smiled and nodded, taking a sip of the water he had with him. "My father might," he said.

"So... how long have you been looping?"

Korra glanced at the spiky haired man in surprise. "Wait, you're actually a looper?" She asked. Yusei raised an eyebrow at that, causing Korra to sigh. "Sorry for being a bit... weird earlier on then."

It was Tarrlok's gala and, as Korra had expected, Hiroshi Sato had come along with his child. What she hadn't expected was for that child to be a boy. Oh sure, she had the occasional loop or two where Asami and Mako swapped genders, but usually the resulting guy was a long haired man by the name of Ash rather than... well, Yusei Sato. As he had introduced himself, Korra had a minor mental breakdown. She had thought she had all the patterns down, even that one strange time that the Equalists were secretly Crab People, at least she had gotten the pattern down for that one!

"I've had worse reactions," Yusei admitted, sipping from his wine glass. The two were off to the side at the moment, under the pretence of Yusei wanting to discuss something with the Avatar... and really that was all he had needed to say. "Mako isn't taking it well, though," he added. Indeed, the firebender seemed to eye the two suspiciously from across the room.

"That's par for the course," Korra muttered. "Every loop it's one love triangle or another, unless one of them happens to be awake. Me

and Asami, the girl you're replacing, fighting over Mako who's usually a guy, Mako and me fighting over Asami when she's a guy and Mako's a girl, Mako and male Asami fighting over me!" She sighed. "Sometimes that's more exhausting than fighting the bad guys," she admitted with a smile.

Yusei nodded. "I can't say I have your... romance problems, but sometimes they can be more exhausting than any end-of-the-world plot," he said. "Or dealing with friends... and loops." He sighed.

"You've got friends you'd like to see looping more regularly, huh?" Korra asked. She shifted in place, looking out the window at the starry sky and the bright full moon. "I've looped hundreds of times so far. I know there are times that I don't 'awaken' til later on... but at the same time, I'm awake much earlier." At Yusei's inquisitive look, she smirked. "You know about the Avatar by now. Thing is, that Avatar is a two part thing, the human in me." Korra explained, a hand touching her chest. "And Raava, the spirit of light. She's what helps make the Avatar more than a mortal being. I know she's always awake, but at the same time not all Avatars are awake. The only one who's constant is me." She sighed again. "And sometimes I wish I wasn't. Aang, my direct predecessor, would probably be able to handle this better than I could. And to top it all off, we don't actually know if Raava is an anchor or not... Sokka is awake enough that we just don't know!"

Yusei looked up at the moon and slowly smiled. "You and me are more alike than you think, Korra. You and I both carry burdens left to us. We both carry important mystical power." He confessed. "I'll admit I still find this world weird... but at the same time it's relaxing that I don't need to worry about some maniac attempting to take over the world by fusing it with the underworld, or trying to release a god of darkness."

"No, we have that second one," Korra corrected.

"Damn," Yusei said, still grinning. "Still... I'm not the first anchor to visit here, am I?"

Korra snorted. "Nope, Ranma was." She smirked. "They still don't know that Aang and I have been plotting a revenge scheme because on the second fused loop, Ranma, Harry, Naruto and I think Ichigo sicked their love interests on him for a vacation!" The urge to cackle was strong, but she resisted it. The two spotted Tarrlok in the crowd.

"Is it me, or does he look a little stressed?" Yusei asked. "I mean, more stressed than the host of something this big has the right to be?"

"Yeah... something's up. He was a bit more obvious about why he wants me here today." Korra admitted. "Mind if I could ask you to have a look around?" Yusei simply nodded, walking off even as Tarrlok approached Korra.

As Yusei navigated the hallways, he concentrated on his Signer powers. It seemed he would have an opportunity to practice another skill he had been honing during the loops. His forearm glowed as his Mark of the Dragon appeared, his eyes taking on the same red glow. Combining the mystical energy of the Crimson Dragon with his own attention to detail, he continued walking, until the sound of voices around the next corner brought him to a halt.

"And if they continue to not listen?"

"Then Amon will purge them, and we will be all the better for it"

Yusei's eyes widened, even as he focused his gaze on them... behind a closet door, there seemed to be an explosive device, something that was counting down with a timer that seemed out of place in this setting... And then he barely bit back a curse. They're much too advanced... unless you happened to be in charge of Future Industries. He walked out into the corridor, fists clenched. One of the two spotted him... and from that angle it just looked like they were discussing away from the party.

"Hey kid, private conversation here," one of the men said gruffly. "Get lost." Yusei kept walking towards them. "I said-"

Whatever the man was going to say died on his lips as he and his companion both saw, for a brief moment, a white dragon looming behind him, it's maw open and teeth bared, a sharp horn threatening to skewer them both as it crawled towards them, the smell of death on its breath... and then the dragon snapped it's jaws shut. The two men fainted as it did and the dragon disappeared as Yusei held out the card for Stardust Spark Dragon. Pocketing it slowly, he opened the door and grimaced. There wasn't an off switch to it. Just what you expect... but it doesn't mean I'll let Hiroshi get away with this, he thought to himself. He took out a pair of wire clippers from his pocket and, his eyes aglow, he started looking.

Amon was standing right outside the gala.

Korra couldn't help but swallow a little. Amon was never so bold usually, and even though now she knew what he is, it didn't help occasional baseline terrors resurfacing...or worse. Tarrlok sighed. "Apologies Korra, this is part of the reason why you are here." He muttered to her. "Amon sent a threat to the council... a threat that changes quite a few things."

And Tarrlok is being unusually cryptic. If it's enough to have him worried though... is Amon going to shed that title so soon? It was only her, Lin and Tarrlok out at the moment with Tenzin and the rest of the Fire Ferrets keeping calm inside.. The area is too filled for many of the Equalists, each armed with what looks to be the electrical gauntlets... and the Equalists had three hostages. One a member of the council. The other two, regular civilians, a young man and a young woman.

"Councillor Tarrlok. What a pleasure to finally meet you, face to face." Amon said. "And both the Avatar and Chief Bei Fong, truly an honour."

"Don't toy with us Amon. What are you after?" Tarrlok announced. "If you think that we are going to give up in the face of you taking hostages..."

Amon chuckled. "I think we both know that I would never have it be so simple. I'm actually allowing us to have a debate, with each side arguing between Benders and Non-Benders. The Councillor is insurance, but one of these people here is a Bender... and the other is not. You will choose one that we will let live... and the other shall die." He explained.

This isn't Amon's style... much too bloody, paints him as the villain... what is Noatak thinking? Tarrlok could easily just pick the non-bender and save face... Korra glanced over at Tarrlok... he's sweating, worried about something. As if... as if Amon had already thought ahead. He mentioned a threat to the Council. Tarrlok had been stressing all night. He had invited her, just to be insurance?

"So what will you pick Councillor? Standing before us on the gala hall that non-benders paid for. Show us just what sort of man you are." Amon asked. "Prove to these people here if I am wrong. Do you truly favor benders over the public, making them the elite. Forming a task force entirely designed to force them down? Or am I wrong and do you actually care for them?"

"Councillor, you know what choice to make... it's obvious." Lin hissed.

Too obvious. And Amon isn't the kind to enter a situation without several ways to twist it so he wins. Amon clearly realizes who Tarrlok is... and is probably threatening to reveal his secret. If he let the non-bender die, then the public would believe Amon to be right, and there would be most likely all out war. If he didn't, Amon would reveal Tarrlok is a blood bender, making the public distrust benders more than ever. If Tarrlok acted, he would damn himself and the city. The councillor would be killed if Lin or her lifted a finger... and Amon is likely thinking that his very presence will render her in effective, and that he has enough men to handle Lin while he handles Tarrlok... and the police weren't responding. Something had happened to them, otherwise they'd have at least been attempting to look intimidating. She needed to stop this.

He needed to stop this.

Hiroshi Sato grinned. Amon's plan had gone perfectly. The explosive had been planted where no-one would find it until it was too late. The Metal Bending police guards had either been knocked out by those few agents that had managed to get in or were dead. Yes, he had revealed himself in the process... but it just meant that finally he would be able to get his vengeance. "Sorry about this Tenzin. It's nothing personal against you... you're one of the few benders who didn't abuse their power." He admitted. Only Tenzin and Mako were awake amongst the Benders, both bound. "But certain sacrifices have to be made to root out the problem."

"How are benders the problem?" Mako asked. "Yes, we have the triads, but Benders have helped advance technology."

"And is that worth the lives lost?" Hiroshi countered. "Children unable to go out at night, or into shady alleys. People divided simply because of what they're born with? No. While Amon might be extreme to you, to me he has the right idea." As he spoke, his own glove sparking with electrical energy.

"Father!" Two Equalists raised their gloves at the source of the voice but then stopped as Yusei walked past them angrily. "What are you doing?"

Hiroshi frowned. Yusei was young, but he hoped that the boy would understand. "Yusei. All this is to-"

"To do what?" That tone of voice threw Hiroshi for a loop. Such a cold tone, such anger. "To kill people for a petty revenge?"

"It's for your mother!" Hiroshi insisted

Yusei grimaced he was standing only a few steps away from Hiroshi. "You honestly think that mum would want you to kill so many people just because a certain kind of people killed her?"

Hiroshi frowned. "Yusei, I'm doing this for the safety of everyone. If Tarrlok and the Triads are allowed to stay around, then more people will die like your mother." He said.

Yusei sighed. "The ends don't justify the means Hiroshi." The elder Sato recoiled like he had been slapped. To hear such coldness, such contempt from his own son? "There has to be a better way, one that keeps balance between both benders and non-benders."

"You've been talking with the Avatar and her friends for too long." Hiroshi said "Such thoughts are nice, but outdated in this day and age." As he said this he sighed and raised up his gauntlet. "I was hoping that I would be able to make you see things the right way. You'll learn, in time."

As he approached his son... his son, so much younger than he is, glared at him... and then with only a brief moment's warning as Yusei's eyes glowed the entire room suddenly felt like the inside of a tornado. As if everything was rushing fast, threatening to blow them away. "No Hiroshi. Your bomb's already been disarmed." Yusei's voice echoed around the room. Impossible. Even his son with all his know how shouldn't be able to... "You've discarded your bonds and your heart. I gave you a chance to leave the path, but it's clear you have no intention to change your ways." As he spoke, energy started to gather in the room, looking almost like a collection of stars gathering together. "And with the clustering bonds I've gathered, light shall shine upon a brand new path!" The stars gathered together... and then blazed as their light engulfed the room. The only sound that could be heard, for one brief moment, was Yusei's. "Take flight! My friend of the spirit world, Stardust Spark Dragon!"

As Hiroshi's vision cleared he heard a gasp... and then realized it was his as he stared at a massive, white dragon with a powerful horn and sharp teeth, towering over them. Even if they were ready, they would tower over his armoured tanks as at full height it's horn scraped against the roof. One of the Equalists charged at the dragon and grabbed its tail with his gauntlet... and then was sent flying out the window with a brief flick of its tail. The dragon spread its wings

and stood behind Yusei, who simply glared. "I suggest you surrender. Stardust here is a good friend of mine... but if he wants a snack, I won't be able to stop him easily."

Before Hiroshi could comment a single voice was heard. Lin crying out "Korra!"

Even as she watched, Korra could feel a great amount of spiritual energy gathering. 'Yusei must be playing his hand... and I'm not gonna let Amon get his way.' She thought to herself. She sighed slowly concentrating... and then she Jumped. Not a simple jump that a regular human could do, but an airbent leap through the air the sent her over most of the Equalists, over Amon's head, towards the hostages. With a few hand movements water from a nearby drain leaped out. It turned to ice and slammed into the back of the first hostage-taker's head. The second barely dodged a blast of fire from her fist... which distracted him for long enough that Korra could land a flying kick to the jaw which sent him flying. A quick flick of her wrist landed him in a nearby cart, a softer landing at least. As for the third and final one who held the Councilor hostage, he reached down to electrocute his hostage... only for Korra to slam her foot down, a slab of stone shooting up barely in time to safeguard from the attack. A well aimed punch and the last one was on the floor, holding onto his right side. The three hostages were behind Korra now.

"So this is how the Avatar act, safeguarding the lies that the Council feeds this city." Amon said.

Most Equalists didn't share his composure as Korra simply glared. This was not the look of a child rebelling against the establishment, trying to impress someone, or even the glare of a fellow adult for doing something wrong. What they could see in her glare was the fury of one who has lived for many thousands of years. One who has judged people like them, and many others, many times over. Even Amon, impassive at the best of times, seemed to flinch slightly under that gaze. "I don't support the actions of the Council as a whole, and how they give greater power to Benders than other people." She said. "But at the same time the end goal of the Equalists is much

more harmful to the balance of the world. Without those who can bend our connection to the spirit world is weakened. In time there may be an era that no longer needs the Avatar to maintain the balance, or benders to keep the world running." Korra's gaze shifted from the group as a whole to Amon... and Tarrlok. "Those who abuse their power may not deserve to have it. But your goal is no better than the Council's task force. You treat benders worse than anyone else. You claim to be making everyone equal, but you're using this campaign to put yourself in power and abuse others!"

Amon's gaze hardened. "Kill the police chief and the Councillor. The Avatar is mine." He ordered. As the Equalist troops rushed towards the doors, Amon rushed forward, starting with a quick flurry of punches and palm strikes, obviously designed to disrupt Chi. Korra weaved back and forth between the blows... she had lived her life enough times to at least be able to recognize what moves Amon is making and when, even as she strikes back with her own chops and kicks. For the moment Amon was much too close for her to try bending, knowing that any movement she'd make would leave her open to his speedy strikes. Still, she was quite proud of herself that so far she had actually managed to block his strikes, although at the same time he had blocked hers as well. She reached out for a nerve strike, but her hand was grabbed. A palm strike surged towards her, clashing with Korra's own hand, only decades of having trained in fighting skills allowing her to keep steady against the older Amon in close combat. "I will admit to being impressed Avatar. It is a shame we cannot persuade you to support this quest."

"I've seen countless despots in my past lives Amon. You claim a revolutionary new, way, but all you're doing is passing the problems people have onto someone else. Your manipulation of Republic City is no better than Yakone's." Korra said. Amon's gaze narrowed further at that and then with a quick turn and a shove, Korra could feel herself being pushed back. As she did, she accidently glanced upwards... and her heart sunk. A full moon. Amon had done this on the night that he knew he would be at his strongest. Amon twisted

his hand towards her... and she felt herself turn rigid, forced to stare at him.

"Korra!" Lin shouted. The Equalists had for the most part been knocked unconscious, and those who hadn't were watching in fear, moreso as Lin and Tarrlok's bodies soon went rigid as well.

"Yakone was a fool and a despot, using and abusing people like tools to get what he wanted, no matter the cost. And I-" Amon started

Korra managed to push herself, still defiantly glaring at Amon. "You are just as bad as he is." She said. Soon enough she was slammed against a nearby wall. "Can't take the truth, huh?"

"Defiant to the end." Amon muttered even as he reached forward. "It is time to put an end to the Avatar."

Even as he did so, a sudden roar filled the air. The Stardust Spark Dragon's head emerged from the door With Yusei atop it. "Your insanity stops here Amon." Yusei announced, his arms crossed.

Amon stared at the dragon for a brief second. That brief second of disrupted concentration was all Korra needed as she kicked forward and knocked him to the ground. The mask was cracked from the kick even as Amon glared at her. Korra simply threw a punch at him which caused the top of the mask to snap off. "It's time to put an end to you" Korra said. Her eyes glowed as she stomped the ground and a prison of stone encased him. She reached forward, one hand going for the head, the other his chest.

"No." Amon eyes widened. "No!" The hand was on his head and soon the second was on his chest. "NO!" The last defiant shout sounded off as Korra's hands glowed.

"So... what happens now?" Yusei asked.

It was two days after Noatak had been arrested. Yusei had taken control of Future Industries but continued the sponsorship of the Fire Ferrets. Hiroshi had also been arrested having tipped his hand too early. Tarrlok had stepped down from the council after a personal talk with Korra which she refused to talk about, and it seemed the council itself might become obsolete.

"If we follow the baseline?" Korra asked. The four, the new Team Avatar, were at the Future Industries race track and both Yusei and Korra chatted away while Bolin and Mako raced in Satomobiles "In a few month's time my uncle is going to try a crazy plot to become the Dark Avatar. If I let it go baseline it becomes giant spirit Unalaq against giant spirit me. To finish up. Then other stuff... but that's the most immediate thing." A pause, the two watching as the siblings looped around the track again. "You know, you didn't need to come out and help."

Yusei smiled. "I help my friends. Besides, you remind me way too much of one of my friends." As he said that, Yusei noticed Mako and Bolin pulling in.

"Aren't you guys going to race? It's SO much fun!" Bolin shouted, a wide grin on his face.

Yusei and Korra looked at each other... and smirked. "No holding back?" Yusei asked.

"Wouldn't dream of it." Korra replied, the two grabbing riding gloves and helmets even as Yusei's Satocycle is wheeled out. Yusei simply let himself grin. Sometime these loops are worth it just to make some new friends. Even if it meant there would probably be a pair of smoking craters in the racetrack afterwards.

4.5 (OracleMask)

Yawn. Another regular, boring Academy loop. Jaden had had plenty of time by now to mix up how his school years went. He'd already

tried living in all the dorms (including, thanks to a gender-swapping loop, the girls' dorm). He'd tried acing his classes, failing his classes, causing riots in his classes, and once he'd pretended to be from 'Soviet Russia' for no good reason at all.

("In Soviet Russia, face-down card activates YOU!" Heh heh...good times.)

But now he was back, at the beginning of his first year, and unless Jaden came up with something, he'd have nothing to look forward to but duelling people who based their decks around weird themes and things they liked. The tennis guy had a tennis deck, the duelling monkey had a monkey deck, the copy guy had the exact deck of whoever he was copying...

'Wait...' Jaden realized, 'I have a superhero deck.'

He grinned.

"NEVER FEAR, CITIZENS OF DUEL ACADEMY! I, HERO MAN, WILL VANQUISH THIS FOE!"

Hero Man, Protector of Card Games, posed dramatically to let his red cape flutter in the breeze. His red motorcycle helmet gleamed in the sun.

Aside from that, Jaden just wore his usual outfit. Ignoring the laughs, cheers, and boos from the crowd, Jaden tried very hard not to cackle at the face Chazz was making. The poor guy had got straight past red and was starting to turn purple.

4.6 (Midnight Crescent)

Twilight the Underdog, Part 1

Twilight Awoke, and was glad to find she was sitting down. Unfortunately, she couldn't quite keep hold of her cards.

Human again. High school again. What did I do to deserve this? She thought as she started to focus on her Loop memories.

"Hey, Earth to Josie," a somewhat high pitched voice called from across the table. "Your hand can't have been that ba..."

Twilight looked across the table at the spiky haired kid, who was looking down at the cards she had dropped before continuing where he had left off. "On second thoughts, I'll let you mulligan if you want."

"Oh, sure." Twilight said, before quickly checking the memories as she shuffled her old hand into her deck. OK, so I'm Josie Wheeler, I'm an unremarkable kid of divorced parents. I'm learning to play a collectible card game off a kid I bullied last year, and I've got a little sister who's losing her eyesight. Then the memory of her in-loop sister's name hit her. Oh no. I'll come help you soon Nyx, I promise.

The kid stared at her for a few seconds, before his eyes widened, and he lowered his voice. "Sorry Joey, didn't realise you were awake too."

"Well, I am awake, but my names not Joey. Or Josie."

"Another fused loop?" Tristan asked, leaning down to prevent people from overhearing.

"It sure looks that way..." Téa said, stretching out in her chair.

"Well, the first thing we need to do is introduce you to Yami," Yugi said, turning back to Twilight. "I'll get him to meet you after school. In the meantime, it's time to duel."

Twilight nodded, and began to draw cards. "My names Twilight, by the way."

"Nice to meet you, Twilight," Yugi said, as he drew to start the duel.

"I still think you did well for your first duel," Yugi said. "Besides, Joey doesn't really have any idea what he's doing right now either at this point in the loop."

"I guess. It's just annoying that I couldn't get any of my... magic or traps?" She waited for Yugi, who nodded in confirmation. "I couldn't get any of them out. Stupid luck of the draw."

"Actually, there's two things I should tell you, before Yami shows up. Our world, or at least the baseline version, it's not luck of the draw. A duellist pours their heart and soul into their deck. It should reflect their strengths and personality. And if they truly believe in their deck, then the Heart of the cards will reward them when they truly need it, as long as they trust their deck. It's why Yami is the best duellist that ever lived. I know it sounds a little hokey, but..." He noticed Twilight was gesturing for him to pause. "What?"

"Yugi, I've been in lots of fused loops now. I've seen a lot of different worlds, which contain a wide variety of strange forces and abilities. I'm from a world of multicoloured magical ponies. My best friends and I can defeat anything with the power of Friendship. I think I can manage a 'Heart of the cards' just fine."

Yugi's jaw hung open for a short while, as he tried to process this new information. After almost a minute, he finally responded. "Point taken, and Téa must never know about this."

"Understood. And your second point was?"

"Well, there's a reason you couldn't draw any of your magic or trap cards."

"Let me guess. Heart of the cards?"

Yugi shook his head. "Nothing like that. Joey just doesn't have any in his deck yet. Although, I normally just grab both our loop end decks

from my subspace at the start of a loop. Some of our cards are pretty rare, and you never know where a loop might diverge..."

Twilight nodded knowingly. "I know the feeling. What else do you keep in yours?"

"Not much. A few alternate decks. Copies of each Millennium Item – our worlds powerful magic artefacts – just in case Yami feels like cutting a few things off early. I've not been on many loops outside this world that had anything worth keeping yet. You?"

"Too many things to mention – I'm my worlds anchor, and I've been Looping quite a while now. I think at the front I have my element of harmony, a couple of light sabres – always pays to have a spare, I find – and a copy of the library of Alexandria." She looked around her nervously. "Wasn't your anchor supposed to be meeting me here?"

Yugi stood with his mouth agape once again. The Library of Alexandria? How does she fit that in there!? Then he realised what he was doing. Shaking the thoughts from his head, he answered the question. "Oh, sorry, slipped my mind. Just give me a minute." Yugi closed his eyes and concentrated. An inverted pyramid slowly came into existence around his neck, almost like a jigsaw completing itself. Once it was complete, a light shone from the eye design on its front, briefly blinding Twilight.

Once she had regained her sight, there was someone standing in front of her. He resembled Yugi, only taller. However, his posture had changed as well, and there was something subtly different about his facial expression.

"I'm going to assume you're Yami, which would explain why you took so long."

"Forgive me, but I must say I prefer to have Yugi deal with people who fuse into our loops first. He has always been more sociable than I." Yami said, brushing one of the blonde waves of hair from his eyes. "Now, can I ask what your home Loop is?"

"I'm originally from Equestria, although I don't know if that means anything to you."

"It sounds familiar, but I don't think I've met anyone from there before. Although, your description to Yugi tells me all I need to know..."

"That's understandable..." Twilight said as she thought it over. "So, how do your baseline events play out?"

"Hmm... I think you may be the first Looper to actually ask that. Unfortunately, the answer may take a while." Yami paused for a few moments, before nodding to himself and continuing. "If you want a full rundown, you could visit the game store Yugi lives in. I can quite easily tell you everything there, and we can even build you a deck, if you want to completely replace Joey for this Loop."

"Sounds like a plan." Twilight said. "It's not as though I've got anything better to do..."

"... And it all ends with me and Yugi duelling. It never ends more than a few days after that. Depending on how long Kaiba waits to start Battle City, and if we skip some events, our loop should last between a year or two. Now, do you have any questions?"

Twilight had a few, but rattled them off at such speed, Yami couldn't catch a single word of them.

"Could you say that again, but slower?"

"Sorry about that. Alright, my first question – what happens if I lose one of these 'Shadow games' when I'm not, so to speak, supposed to?"

"As I understand it, either the loop will be over for you, or you'll wake up when we free you. It all depends on how this loop works. Nothing worse than leaving the loop prematurely should happen though."

"OK. And what do we do if we have to duel each other?"

"Whoever wins, wins. Although, we can ignore the ante rule if we fight in Battle City, if you want."

"That seems a little unfair. We can decide if and when that comes up. Now, about Serenity, the loops seem to have combined her with my, for lack of an actual term, daughter. Is there any way we can go see her earlier than you do in the baseline?"

Yami frowned. "I'm afraid I'm not sure. Even when Joey is awake before Duellist Kingdom, he leaves things as usual. He is always certain he can get the money, so he usually waits until he returns. Although, I think a large part of that is that Serenity is not yet Looping. Tell me, has Nyx Looped before?"

"A fair amount."

"And do you think she could handle her situation?"

"I think she'd be a lot happier if I were there, whether she could or couldn't."

Yami looked at his calendar, and checked the dates.

"We have two weeks until the chain of events for Duellist Kingdom begin. You should be able to visit her sometime between now and then. Let me or Yugi know if you want anyone to come with you, but I understand if you want to visit her alone."

"Alright, last one for now. How did Joey get his Red Eyes back?"

"Hmmm?" Yami placed the last storage box from his subspace pocket on the table.

"Well, you beat that Rare Hunter and got Joey's card back. But he didn't take it. Then he was using it again the next time you talked about him. How did he get it?"

"It appears I left out something important." Yami smiled, as he sat at the table across from Twilight. "After Battle City finished, Joey and I had one last Duel. If he won, he would get his Red Eyes back. I saw it a different way, though..."

"What do you mean?" Twilight asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, Joey should have beaten Marik. He even played a card that would have won the duel, and Marik had no way to stop it. He just couldn't take the strain. So, when we met, I duelled him like it was the REAL Battle City final."

"Wait. Time out." Twilight held her head in one hand, the other indicating she needed a minute. After a short pause, she continued. "From what you've told me, approximately 75% of his 'strategy' is rolling dice or flipping coins, while you had the strongest cards to have ever been made. And you're telling me that, if he had just stayed conscious for ten more seconds, he would have won that final?"

"Not exactly." Yami replied, a small smile spreading across his face. "The heart of the cards works in strange ways, Twilight. When the fate of the World is on the line, or even just a championship title, then perhaps it would have not favoured Joey. But, when the Duel is about nothing more than reuniting lost friends..."

Twilight stared at him for a few seconds. Her response was fairly quiet when it came. "I can't actually argue with that."

"Just as well. It took me longer than expected to explain everything." Yami rose from his chair. "Here is every legal card that has ever existed in Duel Monsters, or ever will." He swept his arm to indicate all of the labelled storage crates. "Now most duellists have an overarching theme, or a cornerstone monster. Kaiba has his girlfr... I mean Blue Eyed dragon. Joey has his luck cards and warriors. Some people use a large amount of traps or magic cards. It all depends on the person. All we need as a start point are some interests of you..."

"Books and Magic." Twilight said before he could finish the obvious question. "I have quite a few other hobbies, but they're the things I'm involved with most."

"That... That is actually a good starting point." Yami began searching through one of the boxes, labelled 'Spellcasters', before pulling out a small group of cards. "Yes, the Prophecy monsters. They are designed to work with a series of magic cards, but I can't see that box, so they will have to wait. Take a look at their effects."

"'Spellbook'? Interesting idea. But I think I'll need more than just these." Twilight said, before taking cards out at random from the box. Most were placed to one side, but she began to stack those she found interesting next to the Prophecy cards Yami had picked out.

Yami then replaced the spellcaster box with the magic card box, and the process repeated.

After almost an hours searching, and whittling down, Twilight had a deck.

However, Yami noted one thing seemed to be aggravating her.

"Arrgh, no, no, no, NO!" She yelled, throwing a handful of cards into the air. "Why can't I find anything for that last slot?"

"I have said the number of cards can vary Twilight. It doesn't matter that you only have 59, it's still a legal deck."

"But it's not a round number!" She said, eagerly ripping the lid off the spellcaster crate, and rummaging through for the third time in five minutes.

Well, it looks like we have a Looper with OCD, Yugi, Yami thought, as he waited for Twilight to calm down.

If she has OCD, why is she making such a mess? Yugi quipped, before continuing. Actually, I have an idea. Do you remember our

first 'Duel Academy' loop?

Somewhat. Wait, are you really suggesting we give her one of our decks cards? We only have so many Spellcasters she could actually use...

I'm not suggesting one of the actual Dark Magicians, but there is one monster in our deck that would probably serve her better than us...

Which one is tha...Oh, yes. That might actually work.

Yami exited his and Yugi's shared thoughts to find Twilight still searching the boxes desperately.

"Twilight."

"Maybe what I should use is another trap. I only have a few."

"Twilight," Yami repeated, a little louder.

"No, that would throw the balance off. It has to be a monster."

"Twilight!"

Twilight dropped the box of cards she had just lifted up, spilling the contents everywhere.

"Oh no, I'm sorry. I'll get it don't worry."

"Leave it for a moment, I'll help you. I have something for you."

"Huh? How could you have gotten something for me? You've been standing there staring into space for the last minute."

"No I ha... No, that doesn't matter. It seems that having 60 cards is important to you." Yami took his deck out of his holder. "And you said you need it to be a monster. I think this would fit in your deck rather well."

He passed the card over to her.

"'Magician's Valkyria'? What makes you think this would fit in well?"

"Two things. Firstly, it has an effect you'll appreciate."

"'Your opponent cannot target face-up Spellcaster-Type monsters for attacks, except this one'." Twilight looked up from the card. "Well, that is useful, but wouldn't it be just as useful for you?"

"You have nothing but Spellcasters in your deck. I do have a few other things. Besides, the second reason is this."

Yami searched through his deck again, producing the Dark Magician Girl. "They aren't linked, but they do seem similar. When I met the anchor of a loop linked to mine, I gave him a card that seemed linked to mine. I only felt it right to do the same here.

A-hem, Yugi "coughed" inside the pairs shared mind.

It is technically true. Just stretching the definition of 'I' a little...

"Thank you. That's a really nice gesture." Twilight said, placing the card on the top of her new deck. She did a recount, to be sure she had a full 60. Satisfied, she breathed a sigh of relief, and sat at the table as Yami replaced the crates into his subspace pocket. "Now what should we do?"

Yami glanced at the clock. "Now we have a test run." He slid a card into his deck to replace his lost card, and offered it over to Twilight for her to shuffle. Once the decks were given back to their owners, they began to draw.

Yami smiled, as he looked over to Twilight. "Let's Duel."

Chapter 5

Loops 5

5.1

Yugi glared at Kaiba from across the table. It was the first time the two had seen each other since Battle City, and Téa could taste the tension in the air. Kaiba wasn't friendly at the best of times, but what was up with Yugi?

"Yugi. You know why I've called you here," Kaiba said as he glared back at Yugi... no, the Pharaoh, the two must've swapped when Téa wasn't looking.

The Pharaoh nodded. "Indeed. You want to challenge me for my title of King of Games, do you not?"

"Not this again," Joey groaned. Téa was inclined to agree. This old argument again?

"Yes, and we'll do it... through the sport of kings!" Kaiba declared.

The Pharaoh's eyes widened. "You mean—"

"Yes, the ultimate battle is—"

"Chess!" the two announced in unison. As one, Yugi's friends collapsed in disbelief. Even as they straightened themselves up Kaiba had already pulled out a Chess board and set up. "Your move, Yugi," he noted, moving a pawn piece up.

"Wait, isn't Kaiba supposed to be really good at chess?" Joey asked. As he did, The Pharaoh seemed to be staring at the board

Tristan rolled his eyes. "Don't sweat it, Joey. Yugi's the King of Games. There's no game he can't play."

An hour later, Tristan's words seemed rather hollow. The Pharaoh was apparently having trouble deciding which move to make. "What's taking him so long?" Téa asked. "It's only his opening move."

"He must have some super secret strategy up his sleeve," Tristan insisted.

The Pharaoh's hand lifted away... and then he turned his head sharply to one side. "No, I don't need your help, Yugi," he muttered out. Silence, then... "What are you implying?" Another few seconds of silence. "Of course I know how to play chess! I'm just... deciding my move."

"There's deciding your move and stalling for time, Yugi," Kaiba countered.

"You stay out of this!" the Pharaoh roared. He looked back at the board... and then stood up. "I'm going to go get a Chess book... to brush up on my skills," he stated as he walked off slowly.

For a few moments, the four just stared as the Pharaoh walked off. "Just so I can check, how many of you actually think he knows how to play chess?" Kaiba asked. No-one held up their hands. "I thought as much."

5.2. (Crossover with the Mega Loops.)

Rock leaped into the air. He smirked as the gate barely opened in time to let him in. "You're getting slow on the activation times, Wily!" he shouted. It had been an interesting loop so far. It was another international robot tournament, but instead of Mr. X, the person who had kidnapped the robots was someone named Dr. Faker. It was a

silly disguise for Wily and he hadn't fallen for it for a second—the man looked like Wily with blond hair dye and a spiked wig! More effort had been put into the disguise, though. Dr. Faker was apparently yet another world famous robotic's expert, this time out of Japan. It was probably the cause of 4 different robot masters being stolen, while the other half remained the same.

Standing in front of him was one of those robots, dressed in rather over-dramatic white and yellow armour, with a wide helmet on his head which covered his face so that only his red eyes were visible, and two large swords he had sheathed. "Utopia Man, you don't have to work for Faker!" Rock shouted... it didn't usually work, but asking his opponent not to fight was usually worth the-

"Ok," Utopia Man said.

Rock blinked. "What."

"I said ok," Utopia Man said. "Dr. Faker definitely isn't feeling the flow. Not my sort of thing."

A loudspeaker crackled, flaring to life. "You stupid little robot! Fight Mega Man! Your master orders it! Do as I—" The loudspeaker was cut off as the armoured robot threw one of his swords at it, slicing it cleanly in half.

Utopia Man sighed, and grabbed his helmet, pulling it off to reveal... a bot that had to be around Rock's age, design wise. He had red and black hair spiked in a way that should be impossible and a wide grin on his face. "Sorry about that. Faker usually starts off evil. He's got good intentions at heart," The gold and white robot explained. "I hope you were Awake enough to avoid a slice like that. I'm Yuma." He held out his hand.

Rock grinned as he shook the other's hand. "Good to see another looper," he said. "You can call me Rock."

"You're a new one. Never ran into a loop like yours before," Yuma admitted. He looked over himself, before he spotted... a strange pendant on his helmet. With a grin it popped free, revealing some rope, quickly going around Yuma's neck. "Hey... can you change your visual spectrum thingies? Got another looper I want you to meet."

Rock raised an eyebrow... but he started shifting through the colour and light spectrum... until he finally spotted a pale blue being floating next to Yuma. He seemed to be saying something, but it took a bit of tuning of his own audio sensors to finally hear him. "... and of all the luck you get stuck as a robot that can make a shield and fight in close combat in a loop where guns are the big thing. Truly it astounds me." The being said.

"Well, you don't have to make me look like a moron in front of the new guy, Astral!" Yuma shouted.

"I would not if you didn't make it so easy," Astral insisted

Rock chuckled at that. "Hey, don't feel so bad. You could be a Robot Master focused on glue," he told him... why Dr. Light was so interested in finishing Bond Man he had no idea.

Yuma sighed... but grinned. "Ah well, robots are still a change. My loop is all about card games."

"Card Games?" Rock asked.

"They can be serious business," Yuma insisted.

"No, it's just that... I think I've met another looper from your universe before. Yugi?"

Yuma grinned. "Sorta... the Yugioh branches are close together, but we each have a separate, if easily fused loop. Yugi is an anchor of one of those branches," Yuma explained. "Why, who was he?"

"Um..."

Rock simply stared at the other Robot Master. "So your name is..."

"Another Pharaoh Man, yes," the blushing robot master said. "Just take my weapon and let me find a patent office. I don't care if I'm a robot; I'm changing my name"

"…No-one special.

Yuma raised an eyebrow at this, but shrugged. "Ok, but be careful of my friends. I think at least my friend Shark is looping here too, but he could be anything."

"So you're Shark Man?"

The robot master in front of him was simply armoured in purple but with an oversized shark head for a helmet. "Gee, how'd you guess?" Shark asked, sarcasm dripping from his muffled voice. The helmet was actually so big it made it a little hard to hear him. "This is some admin's way of getting revenge on me, I just know it."

5.3 (Jcogginsa)

"Your Serpent Night Dragon might be too pathetic for my deck, but at least it'll make a good coaster for my drink!" Espa Roba shouted.

"Hey! That's no way to treat a card!" Joey shouted as he stepped forward. He'd been planning this since duelist kingdom. He had been spending some time with Akiza and Luna that one loop learning how to use it, so his new deck would be making its debut here. The loop was a bit interesting, though—mostly baseline, but with parts of other loops mixed in, including the weird Abridged Loop. "In fact, I

challenge you to a duel, and if I win, then I get Serpent Night Dragon, and your Jinzo!" Joey declared.

"What?! How do you know about my Jinzo?!" Espa Roba shouted, more like his abridged counterpart than most.

Joey grinned, and drew a card from the top of his deck. "Because I'm a true psychic duelist!" he said, flashing Krebons

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5.4 (Midnight Crescent)

Twilight the underdog, part 2

Twilight leant her head against the train's window, the slow rattle of the carriage lulling her to sleep. However, not long after she finally drifted off, the train jolted to a stop, bringing her nap to an unexpected end.

A voice drifted in over the tannoy. "This train has now arrived in Domino City. Please ensure you have all belongings with you if departing here."

"C'mon, this is us." Tristan said, throwing his jacket over his shoulder "Thanks for letting me tag along, by the way."

"No problem. I needed a guide anyway." Twilight replied, with a small smile. She stood from her seat, and followed Tristan on to the platform

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Serenity Nyx Wheeler lay in her bed, trying to get her blurry vision to focus. After failing for what felt like the hundredth time since she Awoke, she turned over and buried her head in a pillow.

All right, she thought to herself, I can't use my magic and I'm practically blind. Chlorophyll, this world sucks.

There was a knock at the door. Before she could even give an answer, a nurse had walked into the room.

"Hello Serenity, how are you feeling today?" She asked cheerfully.

"Fine, thank you." Nyx flipped over once again, and flashed the nurse her best fake smile.

"That's good. Now, are you ready for your tests?" the nurse asked, still smiling. Nyx sighed. Her loop memories had shown her what she could expect, and she was not looking forward to it. She nodded, and the nurse wheeled over the equipment. "Let's get started then."

Almost an hour later, Nyx flopped back on her bed, exhausted and bored out of her skull. The testing equipment loomed in the corner once more, as the nurse made her exit.

"Thank you, Serenity. I'll check in on you later," The nurse said, the gentle words seeming more like a threat.

Alone again, Nyx just lay there, wishing for her magic, her eyes to get better, or just for something, anything to happen.

But most of all, she wished Twilight was there.

Twilight's fingers tapped on the armrest beside her as she waited for the cab to make any more headway through the city streets.

"I forgot how bad traffic can be... How much longer do you think this will take?" Twilight asked Tristan, after another ten minutes without any progress.

"Well, it is rush hour in the city centre, it's always bad." Tristan shrugged his shoulders. "Actually, come to think of it, this isn't that bad, all things considered."

Twilight's eyes widened at the prospect that it could actually get worse than it already was.

"How far from the Hospital are we?" She asked, fumbling around in her pockets.

"Not much more than a mile now," he said, watching her actions curiously. "Why?"

"All right." She turned to address the driver. "That's close enough." She handed over a bundle of notes. "Keep the change."

Twilight climbed out the door, and weaved through the traffic to the sidewalk.

Tristan followed a few seconds later. "Hey, slow down. I get you're desperate to get there, but rushing off without me isn't actually going to help..."

"I know. I just don't want to leave her alone like this any longer. Now, which way?"

"This way," Tristan said, turning down the intersection, before waiting for Twilight to follow him.

Twilight waited at the Hospital reception, her arms crossed. Tristan looked around the room anxiously, before dragging her over to an empty group of chairs.

"Alright, something's bothering you. What's wrong?"

"He never visited her, Tristan. The nurse wants to see me, to talk about 'Serenity's condition.' She wouldn't have needed to do that if Joey had ever been here before."

Tristan took a deep breath. "OK, you're right. Joey doesn't visit Serenity that often. You know why?"

Twilight shook her head.

"Their parents have split custody. Serenity lives with their mother, and Joey with their father. "

"Well, I saw the loop memories. I know that..."

"And how much else did you get from them?"

"I... I guess I kinda skipped over that part." Twilight looked sheepish.

"Their father is an alcoholic and a gambler, and their mother is a nurse at this hospital. Now, you've taken Joey's place this time. So, who ended up with who?"

Twilight stayed silent.

"Starting to see why Joey didn't visit her?"

"Yeah, a little."

A small cough came from behind Twilight. The pair turned to look at the source, one of the Hospital nurses.

"Miss Wheeler, I'm your sister's nurse. I've been told to update you on your sister's condition. Now, we have managed to diagnose your sister's illness. I'm afraid it's not good news..."

Tristan turned away at that point. Twilight nodded.

"We've diagnosed her with Retinitis Pigmentosa, which means that th...

"The photoreceptor cells in her eyes have deteriorated. And now her Retinal Pigment Epithelium is becoming mottled."

The nurse and Tristan both stood with their jaws agape. Twilight looked around at the pair, before hurriedly trying to back out of her comment.

"Uhh... I started reading up on what it could be when she got admitted?"

The nurse took a few seconds before she could reply. "Just... Just go see your sister. I... I need to take a break..." The nurse walked off down one of the hallways, muttering to herself.

Once they were alone again, Twilight turned to Tristan. "I guess I need to be a little more careful about that stuff, huh?"

"What, talking about rare medical diseases to a level as high as the experts? No, I don't see how that could cause any problems."

"Yeah, yeah, I get it. Jeez." Twilight said as they knocked on Serenity's door. Seeing the puzzled look Tristan was giving her, Twilight paused in the doorway. "What?"

"... No, it's nothing. Ignore me," Tristan said after a few seconds.

"O...K..." Twilight said, walking into the room.

Nyx woke from her nap as someone knocked on her door. There were voices outside, and then two people walked in.

Before she could even ask who was there, she felt two arms embrace her. "It's me, Nyx. I'm here."

Nyx felt tears begin to fall down her face as she returned Twilight's hug. When she did speak, it was barely a whisper. "I missed you Momma."

"I missed you too, Nyxie." Twilight broke away from Nyx, and sat down next to the bed. "So, how long have you been Awake?"

"Just a few days. And so far, this loop is awful. I can't use any magic. The only people who've been to see me are nurses, and they only want to run tests. Are you here to get me out?"

"I'm really sorry about that, Nyx, but you need to stay here for a while yet. I promise, I'm doing what I can, but I need you to wait here until then."

"But it's boring here."

"Nyx..."

"Do you mind if I talk to her?" Tristan said from the back of the room.

"Umm, Ok." Twilight said, slightly puzzled.

"Nyx, I'm Tristan. I'm a friend of the people you and Twilight are replacing. I know you're eyes are bad, and the tests are annoying..."

Nyx nodded her agreement.

"...But they know what's wrong with you now. And, if you stay here a little longer, they'll know how to fix it. But there's a catch."

"What?" Nyx asked.

"It's going to cost a lot of money. Money I'm guessing you don't have..."

Nyx shook her head. "I don't loop often enough to get an allowance..." She folded her arms, and huffed.

Tristan raised an eyebrow, and looked at Twilight, who just mouthed, "Don't ask."

"Well, don't worry about that, because Twilight is going to win you the money in a Duel Monsters tournament."

"She is?"

It was Twilight's turn to stare at Tristan. He motioned with his arms towards the beaming Nyx.

"Of course I am," Twilight said, although her voice didn't suggest she had the greatest of confidence.

"And, as an added bonus, I can even stay with you, and let you know how well she's doing. Would you like that?"

"Sure!" Nyx said, looking overjoyed at the idea of having anyone other than the nurses around.

"So, what's the plan, Yugi?" Téa asked as the pair sat down for lunch.

"Well, we need to lure Kaiba to the Game Store. I think if I just duel you instead of Joey, then that can be done as usual. You still have your old deck, right?"

"Yeah, bu—"

"OK, so that's part one. This time, I want to try and just duel him for the Blue Eyes, see if we can stop it getting torn up."

"That's fine, Yugi, b—"

"After that, Pegasus will probably either duel me or invite me to the tournament. I can just accept the invitation, or add a stipulation of my own. Either way, I should be able to get Twilight and myself accepted."

"Yugi, as good as that sounds, I was actually asking if you think we should wait until they get back to kick things off..."

"Oh..." Yugi blushed, before thinking for a few seconds. "Actually, I think we should do this without her if we can. Letting her see an early baseline Kaiba isn't really fair on him."

Téa nodded in agreement. "All right. Hey look! Here he comes!"

"All right, let's get set up quick." Yugi pulled out his deck, and placed it on the table. "And draw!"

Twilight, Nyx and Tristan talked for a while, before a nurse poked her head in the door. "Visiting times are ending in five minutes."

Twilight hugged Nyx one more time. "You be nice to the nurses, Serenity." Twilight stressed the name, making sure Nyx understood.

"Good luck, Josie."

"I'll see you for the first day of Duellist Kingdom, Serenity," Tristan said, catching himself before he started waving to the blind girl.

"OK!"

Tristan and Twilight walked out of the room. When they were a decent distance from the room, Twilight turned to Tristan, a look of frustration on her face.

"What was that in there?"

"Huh? I don't know what you're talking about..."

"There is no cure for her condition. Why would you lie about that?"

Tristan shook his head. "I wasn't lying. Trust me, you'll get a phone call or something in a day or two about it. It's practically one of the constants in the loop. Her condition varies, but they always find a cure. Just as the price of the cost varies, the DK prize money moves to match it too."

Twilight sighed. "Alright, I'll believe you. But why offer to stay behind?"

"Ahh... I've been planning to do that for a few loops now. This just happens to be the perfect loop to do it. Remember, I've seen this movie, and in Duellist Kingdom, I get to give Joey a card that would

never fit in your deck, and throw something into a forest that will just warp back to the person who had it during the next tournament anyway. You won't lose anything by me staying behind, and I can keep Nyx company at the same time too."

Twilight thought over that for a few seconds. "You know, you really remind me of someone..."

"Is that a good or bad thing?"

"Not tellin' ya," Twilight said, before looking at the strange glance Tristan was giving her. "OK, that's twice you've been giving me those funny looks. What is it?"

"It's just, that's twice you've started talking like Joey." Twilight stared at Tristan, who sighed. "Look, it's been twice in a week. I'm willing to call it a coincidence for now, and it's probably nothing important anyway. If it starts to happen more often, we can just ask Yugi and Yami about it. They might know something more about this sort of thing."

"All right, now let's get back."

"Sure. And if we're fast enough, we might even get to watch Yami and Kaiba's duel."

"Right!"

The pair climbed into a cab, and set off towards Domino Station.

Yugi made a big pretence of showing Téa around the card section of his grandpa's store.

"What are we doing, Yugi?" Téa whispered when Solomon became distracted by an actual customer.

"We're stalling for time. Kaiba won't be here for another minute or two, and Grandpa won't keep the Blue Eyes out very long."

The store emptied almost as soon as Yugi finished talking. Yugi looked around, and nodded to Téa. She took out two cards from her actual deck, and walked over to Solomon.

"Mr. Muto, could you let me look at your really rare card one more time?"

"Now, Téa, why would you ever need to see it again?"

"I found some new cards, and I want to see how good they really are. If they're anywhere close to yours, then they'll be great."

"I don't know..."

Téa sighed inwardly, before flashing Solomon the biggest puppy dog eyes she could.

"...But how could I say no to you?"

Just as Solomon unlocked the cabinet, and withdrew his Blue Eyes, the store's bell rung. Turning around, Yugi saw it was indeed Seto Kaiba.

Just in time, Yugi thought, turning back to his Grandpa, who was now halfway through his all too familiar spiel.

"...Has one, I obviously have this one, and the world's number one duellist has done amazingly well to have collected the other three."

Yugi frowned. Something seemed off, and it took him a moment to figure it out.

Wait, that makes five. Yami, there's only ever been four before, right?

Yes, that is a new change, Atem responded. *I wonder who has the fifth...*

A quick glance confirmed that Téa had noticed the change too, but before they could question Solomon about that revelation, Kaiba had burst between the pair. His attempts to buy Solomon's card went about as well as usual.

All right, it's now or never, Yugi told Yami in their shared mind. *You're up.*

"I have a proposition." Yami said, his signature smirk on his face. "Perhaps we could duel for the card?"

Kaiba laughed before answering. "You? Duel me!? I don't know who's more senile – you or the old man. I'm the world's number one duellist. What makes you think you'd last more than three turns?"

"Nothing. But, if you're so confident you'd win, then shouldn't this be an easy decision for you to make?"

Solomon grabbed Yami by one of his shoulders and wheeled him round to face him. "Yugi, you can't go betting with cards that don't belong to you! Especially not when they're my cards!"

"Grandpa, don't you trust me?"

Solomon sighed, and shook his head.

"It's not about trust, Yugi..."

"As touching as this sounds," Kaiba interrupted, "if I was actually interested in seeing this, I'd have stayed home and watched cable. If you're serious about duelling for the card, then come to the Kaiba Corp Building by 6:30 tonight. If not, well, I will get what I want."

Kaiba left the store, and an uneasy silence descended.

After a minute or two, Solomon spoke up. "Yugi..."

"Yes, Grandpa?" Yami responded.

"You've bet my prized possession on a duel you have very little chance of winning, and you did it without my permission. I hope you can understand why I'm disappointed in you."

"Yes, Grandpa."

So much for that plan, Yugi told Yami.

It was a sound plan, Yugi. We just need to execute it differently.

Yugi switched back just as his Grandpa asked a question.

"Sorry, could you repeat that, Grandpa?"

"I asked if you thought that boy believed in the heart of the cards."

"I wouldn't think so..."

"Hmmm..." Solomon stood in contemplation for a few seconds, before handing Yugi his Blue Eyes. "Here. Make that boy respect the Heart of the cards."

Yugi was stunned for a few seconds, before he finally responded. "You got it, Grandpa!"

I think the only reason he did that is because Kaiba called him senile, Yami quipped.

You're probably right, Yugi responded, still staring at the card. *But that's not important right now. We have a duel to 'prepare' for.*

Tristan looked down at his watch as he and Twilight raced into the Kaiba Corp Building. It told him that it was 7:00.

"Did we make it in time?" Twilight asked, breathing deeply after the run from the train station.

"Well, they usually start around seven." Tristan replied, before noticing the tall man walking towards them. "I think we're about to find out."

"Mr. Taylor, Miss Wheeler?" The man asked as he approached.

"Yeah, that's us."

"My name is Roland. Mr. Muto mentioned that you may be delayed. I've been instructed by Mr. Kaiba to escort you to the duelling arena upon your arrival. Their duel should have just begun. Please, follow me."

"Well, at least we won't miss the end, I guess," Tristan said, as the three of them entered an elevator. Roland pressed a couple of buttons, and the doors slid shut.

Yami watched as his swords of revealing light wore off, leaving Kaiba's three Blue Eyes free to attack once more. Looking at the Life Point readout, Kaiba smiled.

While he was still on 1100 Life Points, Yami's had slipped to a measly 50. Granted, he'd taken more damage than he'd expected, but he was still one attack from defeating Yami, and claiming his fourth Blue Eyes.

"This duel is over, Yugi. None of your pathetic monsters could hope to stand up to the onslaught of one Blue Eyes White Dragon, let alone three." Kaiba said.

The door to the arena opened, and Kaiba's smile widened as Twilight, Tristan and Roland walked in.

"Perfect! Now your friends will get to witness your defeat as well." Kaiba turned to face Yami, and finally noticed something wasn't right. Despite the situation, Yugi was laughing. "Did I say something funny, or did you just finally snap?"

"Kaiba, you asked about my 'Pathetic Monsters', and I just couldn't help myself. My deck has no pathetic monsters. But it does contain a dragon slayer."

Kaiba's smile turned into a look of confusion. "A dragon slayer?"

Yami's smirk returned, as he summoned his final monster. "Go, Buster Blader!"

Kaiba's face went pale as the hologram appeared on the field. "Buster Blader!? That's not possible! How did you get that card?"

Yami stared across at Kaiba. "I live at my Grandpa's game store, Kaiba. He's a former Regional Champion. A man who had one of the Blue Eyes White Dragons. Did you honestly think I wouldn't have planned for your ace? Now, you seem to know a lot about my card. Tell me, with your three Blue Eyes on the field, how much stronger will he become?"

He did the math in his head, and he dropped his cards at the result. "4100 attack points... No, it can't be..."

"Yes, Kaiba, it can. Strong enough to slay your dragon, and wipe out your life points. You were right, this duel is over. Buster Blader, attack!"

Kaiba collapsed to his knees as his lifepoints plummeted to 0. "How? How could I lose to an amateur?"

Should we give him the same speech as always, Yugi?

Nah. Let's just leave him be, and see what happens.

All right, Yugi. I just hope you know what you're doing.

Atem and Yugi switched places, and Yugi climbed down from the arena.

"Well done, Yugi," Téa said, as Tristan and Twilight walked over from the other side of the arena.

"Knew you could do it," Tristan said, before lowering his voice so only the group could hear. "Seriously, do you ever actually lose that duel?"

"Only when I'm trying," Yugi replied just as quietly.

"So..." Twilight said, watching as a few Kaiba Corp employees carried Kaiba away from the other end of the arena. "What do you guys usually do now?"

"Well, wait around for Pegasus to get in touch, mostly."

"I meant more about how you pass the time until then..."

Yugi just stared at her for a few seconds, before he held up his deck in response.

Twilight's mouth hung open briefly. "I shouldn't have even asked, should I?"

5.5. (Crossover with Persona 4 Arena series)

Jaden sighed as he leaned back in the Slifer Red dorm. The loop was young, no-one seemed to be awake so far, but he knew something was going on... mainly because he hadn't seen Syrus yet the entire loop. When he had arrived, Banner had taken him aside and explained that the final roommate would be arriving soon. That had been five days ago, and he had already run through the motions of duelling, and beating, Chazz and sorted out the letter issue with Alexis before he could possibly mistake it for an actual letter. He had even made sure to at least try to stay awake through Professor Stein's classes!. Standard stuff he did at the start of a loop. Chumley was out getting some grilled cheese sandwiches and he was simply relaxing, not even focusing on his deck. And then he heard a knock

on the door. "Hold on, I'm coming," Jaden stated as he walked up and opened the door.

The person who stood there was a girl, light-blue hair tied into a ponytail (which would be a lame reason to have her replace Syrus,) the same modified Slifer Red uniform that Blair would gain later on... and then the strange stuff started, with a knight's visor above her forehead, robotic arms (and possibly legs, although those were covered by long socks) and... an axe on her back. It probably functioned as a duel disk too, but it seemed to have... boosters. Not to mention Jaden, of all loopers, knew how dangerous a weapon a duel disk could be.

"You gonna stop gawking anytime soon?" The girl asked as she walked in. She had an accent that reminded him a lot of Osaka."Before ya ask, yeah, I'm a looper."

Jaden raised an eyebrow. "How did you know?"

"I'm a robot too. I'm supposed ta be hiding that but it's so obvious there's no point," She deadpanned. "Before we go on with anything else... PLEASE tell me if this is a normal school loop or not."

"... it's a school for card duelling," Jaden told her. "We don't usually have much trouble in the first year, but after that you've got an evil cult, a demonic woman and the embodiment of Darkness himself to deal with."

The girl sighed. "Is that it, though?"

"Yeah... why?"

The girl smiled a little. "Firstly, my name's Labrys, or if you want the full name, 5th Generation Anti-Shadow Supression Weapon Labrys." She said. She pulled the chair over and sat down on it, ignoring the dull thunk of her blades hitting the wood. "And one of the things I try to do is go to school. Try living a normal student life, you know?" As she talked, a small smile crossed Labrys' face. "Usually, when I'm

awake, my sister is too. But it ain't normal school, 'cause I eventually have to fight monsters again." Jaden frowned. That didn't seem to explain why she was so eager for a normal school though. Darkness beat out simple monster fighting after all. "But the last few loops have been nuts," Labrys continued. "Ya think you have a bad time in Eiken, try being student council president. After that, I got tossed into a loop with Miss Frizzle, me being a robot was the least confusing thing then."

"And I'm willing to bet you had one more before coming here?" Jaden asked.

Labrys sighed. "Yeah, one day of High School... and then there's a damn zombie apocalypse!" She growled. She slammed her fist against the wall... or more accurately, through the wall. "... oops."

"Don't worry about it," Jaden said as he looked through his deck. "Ah, here we go, Clay Guard!" He held up the Trap card, and Labrys was treated to the sight of clay blasting out, as it fixed the hole in the wall.

She grinned. "And here I thought my Persona would be the weirdest thing. Think you can give me at least a year of quiet before I get dragged in?" Labrys asked.

"Sure, but only if we get to duel at some point," Jaden insisted gleefully. Labrys simply smiled and held out her hand, which Jaden shook... only for reality to almost pause around them

Thou Art I... And I Am Thou

The two looked at each other as a mysterious booming voice echoed around them. "Huh... Aigis talked about this before... but I'm not a Wild Card," She muttered.

Thou hast created a bond that transcends time and space, a bond that shall prove useful in future times.

"Future times... maybe it means other loops?" Jaden suggested, only to get a shrug from Labrys.

Thou shalt have our blessing with the Fool Arcana and the Wheel of Fortune Arcana.

The darkness faded... and Labrys simply grinned. "Wow... so this is what a Social Link feels like." She said.

"Social links?" Jaden asked. Still, if he focused on Labrys he noticed that he 'thought' next to her a symbol of the Wheel of Fortune tarot card, something he had learned when bored one loop. Next to it was the number 1.

"Bonds that can be used to form power. I bet because we're loopin', it's harder to pull off," Labrys said, unable to knock the smile off her face. "Anyway, I should probably start from the beginning... in my loop, we fight these monsters called Shadows..."

"Your fate shall be decided in this duel, my dear," Sartorius stated. At the moment, he had Arcana Force XXI: The World out and looming over her. It had just destroyed her Labyrinth Wall by reducing it to rubble, and with the two Moon Tokens he had out, victory was all but assured. "And now, I activate my Reversal of Fate!" He declared. A roulette wheel appeared above them and attached to the card, both starting to spin. "With this card I can have my World's effect become the opposite of its current position," he added. True, the World was currently in the reversed position, but the wheel would change that. Jaden would simply watch and be broken as his best friend was brainwashed, and forced into the—

"I activate my trap, then!" Labrys announced. "Reversal of Fortune!" the card was a trap, but the picture on it showed a black haired man divided in half. One side was a normal man wearing a white scarf, the other a cloaked reaper, with a second roulette above them. "See, you're not the only one who works with that sorta stuff. When you activate an effect, I can use this card and spin it." As Labrys

explained the card, the second, more normal seeming roulette wheel flew out and attached itself to the first. This started spinning both it and the card again barely before they would stop. "If it lands right side up, your effect is applied twice. If not, then nothing happens."

Sartorious scowled. How hadn't he seen this coming? The Wheel of Fortune had been shown in a favourable position to take down the robot girl... but she was trying to defy it? "And if it's applied twice, then The World would be in the reversed position again." He said. It was ingenious admittedly, but still stalling for time. Nothing could defy fate. And yet as the wheel started to slow... he felt something. As if a force outside his notice had changed fate as the Wheel landed on right side up... and the World in reverse. "How? How did you do that?" He asked, barely contained anger in his voice as he ended his turn.

"Not everything is decided by fate," Labrys said as she drew a card from her duel disk. It was an axe, but she had shoved the extended shaft into the ground and used the blades as her disk. while it was an amusing sight, for her nothing about this loop was more amusing than seeing Sartorious fume as someone beat him at his own game.

5.6

"Hey Astral, Shark... can you tell me something?" Yuma asked. The three were sitting around the Tsukimo dining table. Kari was out, Yuma's Grandmother was shopping, and Lillybot was cleaning the front yard.

"What is it Yuma?" Astral questioned.

"Yeah, you don't usually ask both of us things," Shark added... and then facepalmed "Unless it's about Astral and Barians... Astralians?"

"Australians?" Yuma suggested.

Astral glared at the two. "Being of Astral world should suffice."

Yuma and Shark chuckled despite the glare, or indeed because of it. "Well," Yuma said "I was wondering... what allows us to pull off the draws?"

"Because I'm of Astral world?"Astral said.

Shark shook his head "I'm betting for me and you it's because of the power of Chaos."

"But that's just it... what allows us to do that? What is Chaos? I mean, Astral, I could pull off Shining Draw when in Astral World," Yuma reminded. "And let's not get into ZeXal."

"Please do, it'd be funny if Kari came home and you had to explain what happened," Shark chuckled and only stopped because both Yuma and Astral were glaring at him now.

"You sound like you have a theory, Yuma," Astral noted.

Yuma nodded. "Space Magic."

"Space Magic?" Astral and Shark asked in unison.

"Space Magic. Barians and Astral are from space, and it's pretty much magic."

Shark opened his mouth to object... and then stopped. "Damnit... that's actually a good point."

"Looping Observation," Astral muttered to himself. "Even an intelligently challenged person can have good ideas on occasion."

"Hey, that's not fair," Yuma complained.

5.7 (Gamer A)

It was shortly after the Battle City Tournament concluded (memorable highlights had included the final between an awake Yugi

and Joey and unawake Mai Valentine defeating Yami Marik in the quarterfinals after Yugi told her the Winged Dragon of Ra's conditions). Yugi, Atem, Joey, Téa, and Tristan had been waiting to see what would happen next this time.

They thought it would be a simple Doma variant when they saw the soulless Rex and Weevil, but since they'd delayed opening the God Cards to Dartz's draining spell, they'd managed to avoid having the world being overrun by monsters for a few days. They'd been rather annoyed when the God cards had been stolen from Yugi's room that night anyway.

"Remind me again why we didn't just Leave them in Subspace?" Tristan commented, as they combed the town for the theives.

"They seem to dislike entering that null space," the Pharaoh answered, "Perhaps this will change their mind."

Something seems odd, Yugi noted. Usually, those four summon the Egyptian Gods to lure us in. But they haven't this time.

That is unusual, Atem admitted, as he led the four of them to check the usual spot anyway. Have we changed things enough for them to use a different strategy?

"Found 'em!" Joey called, as they came upon the Doma Bikers talking among themselves. "All right, youse guys gonna give us the cards back, or are we gonna have to get ugly?"

Their enemies for this round seemed surprised, (except for their first opponent, who seemed as unshakable as always). "Looks like someone beat us to the punch," Valon noted. "You want your cards back, then? Sorry boys, but we don't have them."

"What? But then who does?" Téa asked.

Raphael hmmed. "Just looking for the first suspicious-looking person, I see. Not the smartest strategy. But the Egyptian God Cards

do have significant power, so your concern makes sense. We were planning on taking them, but if there's someone else involved then we'll need to deal with them eventually. First, though..."

The first Doma minion, who in all of their loops had never given his name, stepped forward and triggered his Chaos duel disk to extend. "You are destined to fight us, and to forfeit your souls to our grand design."

"This could get complicated, so we should get you out of the way while we have the chance," Raphael concluded.

The Pharaoh activated his Battle City disk. "Very well. But if you think we're easy prey, think again. I have no doubt that you're more dangerous than the Rare Hunters we dealt with recently, but against —What?" The Millennium puzzle was surrounded by a golden light, then pulled or flung away into the distance, breaking Atem's possession of Yugi and leaving the younger Anchor on his knees, listening to a broken chain slip and fall onto the ground next to him.

"Joey," Yugi said, pushing himself back to his feet as he began putting the pieces of an idea together. "Remind me again why we decided to delay unlocking the Pharaoh's memories?"

"Um, well," Joey began, "Kaiba was setting up another tournament. And the museum is where the Duel Express stops, so—" he cut himself off as he remembered just which variant involved a Duel Express tournament and the millennium items and God Cards going missing. It was a rare variant, and usually had a visiting Looper joining them, so none of them had remembered that it was a possibility.

"Ultimate Duelists, I've found you," Ishizu said, approaching. "Apologies, but I had a vision only just before the Millennium items scattered." Yugi hadn't seen the point in taking the Necklace this time around. "A great evil has been reawakened with the power of the Gods. And I must help you to stop Reshef the Dark being before it is too-"

Ishizu had stopped when she saw a green circle lowering itself to the ground around her, centered behind her. Everyone looked around to see Valon having just activated his disk and Seal of Orichalcos card. "Oh, did I interrupt? Sorry, do go on. We can all talk and duel at the same time."

"...Well, **** " Tristan voiced all of the looper's thoughts.

5.8 (Krika)

Yuma wasn't quite sure what was up this loop. It was baseline as far as he could tell, but Shark and Rio had apparently vanished almost the instant the loop had started. He'd gotten a message from them saying that they were heading to Barian

World, but they'd left no details beyond that, and since Kite didn't appear to be awake, following them would present some difficulty. Really, the only variation from the baseline that he'd found was some special history lecturers that the school was hosting, and even that was within the normal baseline variation.

Speaking of them, the lecturer was currently late. The student body was starting to get a bit restless, and even the teachers didn't seem to know what was going on. Heck, the ever-patient Astral was starting to get a little bored. Yuma idly wondered if perhaps the lecturer had found a Number, and would end up trying to recreate historical events with the student population or something.

"If that scenario were to happen, I would calculate that with the baseline set of Numbers, the most likely one to cause it would be either one of Trey's Numbers, or one of the Mythyrian Numbers. Either one would make for a most interesting change of pace, do you not agree, Yuma?"

He glared at his partner spirit. "Hey! Just because you like to keep track of all the loop variations doesn't mean that I have to like extra class time!"

He was interrupted as the lights dimmed, the teachers around the edges of the room sighing in relief. Mr. Kay stood up in the middle of the stage, speaking into the microphone.

"It is my pleasure to introduce your special guest lecturer…..Barian Nasch!"

Now, that got Yuma and Astral's attention.

An Overlay Network formed on the stage, and Shark, in full Barian regalia, stepped out of it. The student body was silent for a moment, before erupting into a loud cacophony of questions. The subject of their questions endured the noise for a moment before speaking.

"Be silent."

Yuma was very much reminded of the fact that Shark had, in his previous life, been a king. That single sentence had managed to silence the entire room, everyone else staring dumbly at him. Shark waited a moment, as if daring someone to break the silence, before continuing.

"I am Nasch, the last king of the United Lands of the Poseidon Ocean. I was reborn as a being of energy in a realm parallel to this one due to the immense hatred I felt at my time of death. My original intention was to cause havoc in this world as a stepping stone toward eliminating another parallel realm, until I discovered the criminal neglect my period in history suffers in your education system. I am going to fix this."

After school let out, Yuma stayed behind, (using the ever-helpful excuse of "remedial classes" to explain what he was doing to his friends and family), and managed to catch Shark as he was using a spare classroom to prep materials. The Barian looked up as he entered.

"I wondered when you'd show up. Surprised?"

Yuma chuckled. "More than a little."

Astral spoke up. "May I inquire as to what inspired you to do this?"

Shark leaned back in his chair and chuckled. "Funny story, that. Marin and I were originally planning on just messing around in Barian World, maybe diffuse the war if things worked out that way, and then we mentioned how we really couldn't find much information on the time period that most of us came from. Vector seemed……insulted, by this."

Yuma tilted his head in confusion. "Wait, are they looping?"

Nasch shook his head. "No, but we stopped by the Mythyrian Ruins and handed their Numbers out. It just makes things easier, really. But anyway, Vector was rather insulted that his handiwork had been forgotten. I had to talk him out of launching another campaign of conquest, and we eventually settled on doing this." He paused. "Well, Marin, Vector, Dumon and I settled on this. Alito, Girag, and Mizar should be doing research about how well known their time periods are, although I wouldn't be surprised if Mizar is sulking somewhere about having been human, and Alito and Girag might just be bar hopping."

Yuma nodded. "One question though—Barian Nasch? Don't you have an actual last name?"

Shark shook his head. "Nope. The royal family didn't. A holdover from when we were supposed to be neutral peacekeepers before the United part of the United Lands happened."

"But...Barian?"

Shark glared at him. "Do YOU want to argue with what I choose to call myself?"

"Considering your loyalty to Barian World, I think it is a fitting name," Astral interjected. Yuma rolled his eyes.

"Whatever! We're totally going to duel sometime soon, though!"

Shark chuckled. "One track mind as always, Yuma, one track mind…"

5.9 (Adyen)

Yugi calmly watched as Yami Marik laughed hysterically at having all 3 Gods out on the field.

He was kind of bored, actually. It seemed like he was the only one awake on this loop, and started once again from the time that he finished the puzzle. He decided that he wanted to try something out, and beat Kaiba with a random deck that he made based around Shield & Sword. Once he got to the Battle City, he did not take Slifer and apparently that was enough for Marik to take back Obelisk from Kaiba as well.

"... and there is nothing you can do but be destroyed next turn!" Marik gloated as he ended his turn. Yugi had played rather defensively and the gods had just cleared his field of all monsters. He was holding on to 6 cards in his hand, but had not played much other than to put monsters in defensive position each time.

Yugi glanced off to the side where all his normal friends were looking at the three gods in fear and had to admit that this was pretty much what he was hoping for.

"So, done yet?" Atem asked Yugi as he absently drew from his deck.

"Yaaa... we're done here," Yugi said as he shuffled through his hand. "I have to admit, this is as nice a view of the gods as I thought it would be, but I got to admit that I should have ended this a few turns ago."

"Have you been stunned idiotic by the GODS, Yugi?" Marik angrily yelled. "There is nothing you can do before the might of the three

Gods together!"

"Well, to be honest, I sort of have been cheating a bit." Yugi admitted. "See, thing is, when I draw things like this, I really should be revealing it immediately so that I don't get people's hopes up. But I really wanted to see your face when I destroy all three gods and win at the same time."

He slowly placed five cards into the duel system as he said, "Because even Gods cannot stand against the one who has been lost in time. As the one bound by the strongest chains is released, nothing can stand in the way of Exodia!"

The five pieces of Exodia slowly revealed themselves around Yugi and recreated the being that had been so strong that it had to be chained in five parts just to be contained. Yugi noted to himself that the holographics on the blimp were even more impressive than normal as it showed how Exodia broke the chains and stepped up to the field.

"Even Gods can be destroyed, Marik! Exodia, obliterate everything!"

A flash of white light filled Marik's side of the field as everything was destroyed. The howling cry of "NOOOOOO" filled the air as even Marik's dark side was destroyed with the gods.

"So apparently not beating Kaiba with Exodia makes people not expect it. Huh. Good to know," Yugi muttered to himself.

"Told you it feels great to be more dramatic as you do that," Atem commented as Yugi walked down the platform casually.

5.10 (The Imaginatrix)

It seemed to be another lonely loop for Yugi and Atem. They had Awoken on the ship to Duelist Kingdom, so had not been able to change any of the events up to that point. None of their friends had

given the signals they had devised to tell each other they were Awake, so Yugi had decided to keep to Baseline until he got bored.

It was the night that Bakura showed up and tricked them into a Shadow Game, and the white-haired teen had just asked them what their favourite cards were when something completely unexpected happened.

The air was suddenly filled with music, a pure melody played on what sounded like some kind of flute. Yugi's feeling of surprise and awe was reflected in the expressions on his friends faces. Bakura, however, clutched at his head with a cry, the Millennium Ring glowing around his neck for a moment before vanishing. Ryou raised his head and looked bewildered for a moment, before his eyes grew round and he, too, was caught up in the spell of the music.

It had been several loops since Yugi had heard the voice of this instrument, but he had not forgotten it and recognised the source almost at once. He knew there was only one way he could be hearing it in an otherwise Baseline loop.

In his cell, Mokuba raised his head as the music reached him. His heart swelled with renewed hope as he listened, enthralled, to the strange melody. He sat thus for several minutes, until a voice at the door broke him out of his reverie.

"Master Mokuba!"

The child spun around and stared through the bars of his cell door at the man already picking the lock. It was not the face he most wanted to see, but it was only slightly less welcome.

"Roland!" he cried. "How did you find me? Where's—"

"Mr. Kaiba is waiting for you on the battlements. He insisted it was the only way his plan had a chance of succeeding." The lock gave way and the door swung inward. Roland entered and scooped

Mokuba into his arms. "There is no time to waste," he said as he turned and began retracing his steps at a brisk pace. Mokuba did not protest. The sound of the music was already growing louder, and he was once more caught up in its beauty.

When he and Roland reached the battlements, the child could only stare in disbelief at the player of the strange pipe. The brunette's eyes opened as they approached, and he removed the instrument from his lips long enough to favour his wide-eyed brother with one of his rare smiles.

In his private quarters, Pegasus lay curled on the floor, his hands over his face. The headache had been sudden and brutal, and unlike the spirit of the Ring, he had not been able to escape it, and was too weak even after it receded to call one of his guards, let alone use the Eye. He would not realise Seto Kaiba had come and gone, taking Mokuba with him, until the brothers were well away from the island.

It wasn't until Yugi and Atem got back from Duelist Kingdom that they had a chance to get an explanation out of Kaiba. The tournament had been more uneventful than the Baseline after the Pirran Pipe incident, especially since Pegasus had still been recovering from the effect it had had on him when he faced the co-Anchors.

Kaiba had been waiting for him at Kame Games, but had refused to say anything until they were alone in the back of his limousine, on their way to his mansion.

"I always have a reason for doing something," he began without preamble. "I don't waste pocket space on anything that I won't have occasion to use in a future loop. I took the Pirran Pipe from Deltora for one reason and one only: to protect Mokuba. I know what the loops can do to those who are unprepared, and I want to spare my brother as much grief as possible once he wakes up."

"I understand," Yugi said quietly, "but you know that's going to take a while."

Kaiba nodded, still composed.

"This is not the only strategy I intend to practice," he said. "The Pirran Pipe will be less effective on some loopers than others. I'll use this time to prepare for Mokuba's Awakening. The longer I'll have to wait, the more time I have to plan."

That sounds like he's putting a brave face on, Yugi said to Atem.

True, the Pharaoh responded, but even after looping for so long, he keeps his feelings well-hidden.

Chapter 6

(Apologies for the delay in this one, the Beta-er got busy. On the flip side, we'll probably have a seventh chapter ready soonish)

(Oh, and as for Arc-V loops... currently they are not going to be compiled until at least the end of the first major arc. Even then, I'm reserving judgement until then)

6.1 (Partial credit to Fan of Most Everything)

Yugi smiled as he leaned back, his arms behind his head. "So yeah... that's pretty much the basics of the game and this loop." He explained. Before him was a young red haired girl with an excited gleam in her eye and energy to burn. "I'm surprised Twilight didn't explain this, she really seems to enjoy her loops here."

The red haired girl simply grinned. "Ah'm more excited at the tech being used for all this. Your sayin' that y'all have holographic tech despite bein' a baseline human world?" She asked, playing down a face down card. Bloom Wheeler, or as Yugi had guessed earlier in the day, Apple Bloom, had replaced Serenity Wheeler for this loop. She had also proceeded to heal her eyesight in ways that not only had the doctors baffled but both Yugi and Joey knowing that she cheated, given that her own words to them when asked were: "Ah'm not missin out on a single moment in this loop!"

"Sorta. It's all being used for the purposes of enhancing Duel Monsters at the moment." Yugi stated, even as he flipped up a trap to counter her.

"Wait, so advanced tech is being used for the sole purpose of-"

"Yes, we've heard that reaction before." Yugi interrupted with a nervous chuckle. Not entirely good memories in those loops. "Still, with a few nudges, it gets picked up fast by pretty much everyone." He added, drawing a card and playing down Blackland Fire Dragon. The loop was still early, after all he hadn't even faced Kaiba yet and so still had his old deck. "I attack."

Bloom grunted, even as she mentally calculated. "Right... then let's see if ah can do this." She stated, drawing a card... and grinning. "Ah win."

Yugi blinked. "What?"

"Ah win. I drew Apple-Xodia." Bloom stated with a cheeky grin, flipping the cards around, to show each looked like an equine version of Exodia on an apple background.

Yugi blinked... then grinned, even as golden light surrounded him. While he looked no different apart from seeming to become slightly taller and gaining a more serious expression, Bloom could tell by his attitude that this wasn't the same Yugi. "Well done, it takes a lot to get such blatant cheating past my partner." Atem commented.

"Cheatin'? Ah see no cheatin' here, I won it fair an' square," Bloom remarked, her grin never faltering.

Atem's grin mirrored her own. "Just don't try it with the holograms, these cards have microchips in them for recognition and the Duel Disks especially can detect cheating," he pointed out. He gathered up his cards into the deck and shuffled, Bloom doing the same. "Now, if you want cheating, let me tell you the time I turned one of Kaiba's biggest monsters against him."

They began again. Then Bloom laid down a spell card on her first turn, and Atem's face met the desk. "Honestly, Bloom..."

"What? Ain't nothin' wrong with the card, 'cept Ah'm gonna win next turn."

" *Test of Endurance* isn't even from Duel Monsters!"

"Pfft. Details."

6.2 (Midnight Crescent)

Twilight the Underdog, Part 3

Twilight woke up to the sound of her phone ringing. She quickly answered, and sat up in her bed.

"Hello?"

"Hi Josie, it's Yugi. Grandpa found a package for me this morning, and you'll never guess who it's from!"

"Wait, it's that time already?" Twilight asked, as her mind finally caught up with her. She lowered her voice for her next question. "And, let me guess, your grandpa is still in the room, right?"

"Well, yeah, it is to do with Duellist Kingdom... But that was just a lucky guess!"

"Alright, when do you want me to come round for?"

"Can you get here for 10?"

"If you brew a pot of coffee, I can be there by 9:30."

"Sure! I'll see you then."

Twilight climbed out of her bed, wandered over to her wardrobe, and started to get ready.

When Twilight walked through the door of the game store, the first thing she saw was a pot of coffee on the counter, and Yami stood beside it, hands firmly wedged in his pockets as always.

"I hope this is to your liking, Twilight." Yami said. "Yugi and I have never tried to make coffee before."

Twilight eyed the black liquid suspiciously, before adding a dash of milk. Taking a sip, she sighed in relief.

"For a first attempt, that was fine." Twilight said as she began to cradle the cup. "So, what happens now?"

"Well, we have to wait and see how Pegasus acts, but..."

"Why do I have the feeling that but is going to be a major pain?" Twilight asked, taking a seat on the counter.

"Alright, so far, there have been a few different versions of Pegasus. Sometimes, he focuses purely on his Kaiba Corporation takeover, either for their holographic technology or for the money. Sometimes he and Yami Bakura essentially switch places. I have seen loops where he does the tournament in his late wife's memory, and others where he cancels the tournament last minute because of Kaiba's mysterious disappearance."

Twilight sighed "So what you're saying is that we have no idea what could happen? I'd ask why that doesn't surprise me, but I have a feeling the answer wouldn't either."

"Well, most of the time, he does end up as his baseline - an eccentric billionaire inviting many children and young adults to his private island to play a children's card game."

"Sure... Wait, what?" Twilight said, doing a double take. "So, remind me not to be in a room alone with Pegasus then..."

Yami continued to smirk. "Duly noted. Now, no matter what version of Pegasus we end up with, the invitation remains practically the same. Unless he cancels the tournament, he will send a VHS inviting me to take part in the tournament. Sometimes there may be a shadow game, sometimes not."

"Well, if that's the case, how are you going to get me out there? It's not as though you can ask a tape..."

"That will depend on if there is a shadow game or not."

"What does that have to do with anything?"

"If there is a shadow game, then I will be duelling with Pegasus. That means I can talk to Pegasus, and at least try to get you included in Duellist Kingdom. No shadow game, then no conversation, and we can only try the baseline."

"So we hope there's a shadow game?"

"Unfortunately, yes."

Twilight poured herself another cup as she contemplated things. "So be it. How much longer do we have to wait before everyone else gets here?"

"Téa should be here any minute now. And Tristan said he had other things to attend to. I assume it will have to do with... Nyx, was it?"

Twilight nodded. "Yeah. I'm just glad there'll be someone with her. Maybe we should get ready while we wait for Téa?"

"Solomon is setting everything up. Although, he did start before I even called you. Perhaps we should check on him..."

Once Téa had shown up, the group sat down in the back room, and began the tape. A man appeared on the TV, in a scarlet suit, sipping a glass of wine.

"It's started sir." A voice flowed through the TVs speakers, evidently from someone behind the camera. The figure sat in the chair on camera nodded before speaking.

"Greetings, Yugi-boy. I am Maximillion Pegasus, creator of Duel Monsters."

"We al..."

"But I'm certain you knew that already." Pegasus took a sip of wine. "Your recent defeat of Seto Kaiba has thrown the duelling world into quite the furor... and I must say I approve. Seto always was a little up tight. I think you'll be a breath of fresh air, Yugi-boy."

"What is he rambling on about this time?" Solomon asked quietly.

"This time?" Yami asked.

"Shh, he's started talking again."

He's very clearly avoiding the question, Yami. Yugi pointed out.

I noticed. What I want to know is why... Yami replied.

"Ahh, I seem to be getting ahead of myself. I'm certain you've heard of my little tournament I've arranged. Well, to be blunt, ever since your duel, no-one's seen or heard from Kaiba-boy. Which is a problem. I need someone to be the big draw at my tournament. And, if I can't have Kaiba-boy, then who better than the rising star who beat him?"

"But that was my first real duel. How can he be so sure I'll be good enough?" Yami protested.

"It was broadcast across the country, Yugi," Solomon said, placing his hand on his Grandson's shoulder. "You deserved to win, no doubt about it."

"Everything you'll need is in the box this tape came in. Goodbye, Yugi-boy."

"Téa, what's in there?"

"Give me a sec..." She pulled out a tray, containing a glove, two small tokens shaped like stars, and two Duel Monsters cards. She placed the tray on the table. "Hey, wait. There's something still in there." Digging more padding out of the box, Téa produced another tray, its contents the same as the first.

"Wait, why were there two?" Yami asked, a puzzled look on his face. *Seriously, do you have any ideas, Yugi?*

Sorry Yami. I'm drawing a blank too... Yugi replied.

"I suppose it's now or never..." Solomon said. "Pegasus wanted Duellist Kingdom to be the largest tournament ever. So he's invited every Regional Champion, reigning or former."

It took a moment or two for Yami and Yugi to catch on to what that meant. The pair switched places before Yugi continued the conversation. "But it's been years since you really duelled, Grandpa. Are you sure you're up to this?"

"No, Yugi. I'm probably not. You're right, I haven't duelled in years, I haven't even seen half of the new champions, and my deck is probably completely out of date. But I'm still going. I didn't want to retire when I did, but I had no choice. I have another chance, and I want to take it."

"Why not just send someone in your place, say they're your student or something. I'm sure Pegasus would understand..."

"And who would I send, Yugi? You're already going, and Téa, while she may be improving, wouldn't last two turns against the professionals."

"Actually, I was thinking of Josie..."

"Josie? She doesn't even have any Magic or Trap Cards in her deck. I'd be better off sending Tristan, and he doesn't even duel!"

"Actually, Mr Muto, I've been building a new deck, with Yugi's help. Maybe if you taught me..."

"There's less than a week until the tournament, there is nothing like enough time to teach you."

"Give her a chance, Grandpa? Duel her. If she still doesn't impress you, then we'll drop this. If she does well, will you at least consider it?"

Solomon stood deep in thought for a few minutes. Eventually, he gave his answer.

"Alright, one duel. But I won't be going easy on you. We'll be playing by Pegasus' rules. And I'll be judging your skill. Even if you somehow win, that may not be enough."

"I understand. Thank you, Mr Muto."

"If you're going to duel me, call me Solomon. Unless you really doubt yourself that much," Solomon quipped.

"I just thought I'd show ya some respect, old timer."

Solomon stared across the table at Twilight, his lips slightly curled, obviously annoyed by the comment. He took a breath, before sliding his deck over to her, as she did the same.

"Let's duel!" The pair echoed as they drew their hands.

"Ladies first, Josie. You'll need all the help you can get." Solomon said, as he looked over his cards.

"And you'll regret that decision. Believe me." Twilight drew another card from her deck, and looked her hand over. *Well then, let's see how he likes this...* Twilight smiled as she set her first card on the table. "I play The Secret Village of the Spellcasters. As long as I have one of my Spellcasters on the field, your magic cards are

useless. Then I summon my Fool of Prophecy, and lay one card face-down." She laid her mirror force behind her Fool. "Your move."

Solomon looked puzzled as he drew from his deck. "An interesting strategy... I've never seen those cards... May I?" Solomon held out his hand. Twilight slid them over. "I would assume you're using a lot of Spellcasters, given this villages effect? And this Fool... I expect I'll see these Spellbooks later..."

"I guess there's little use denying it." Twilight said, returning her cards to their places "But that's only half the problem you have, isn't it? Even if you know what's coming, the question now is whether or not you can stop it."

"We won't find out by talking about it." Solomon said, looking over the cards in his hand. He selected his Mirror Force, Swords of Revealing Light, and Horn Imp. "I'll set this monster face-down, and place two more cards face-down. That ends my turn."

Twilight drew, and looked over her hand. "I'll set a monster face-down." She set her Temperance of Prophecy. "Now, my Fool will attack your face-down monster."

"And you were doing so well..." Solomon said, flipping one of his face-down cards. "Mirror force redirects that attack, taking down your fool. Are you done?"

Twilight groaned in frustration. *Should have seen that coming...* She thought, before responding. "Yeah, your move."

"Then prepare to face one of my strongest monsters." Solomon added a card to his hand without even looking, before drawing out a card from the centre of his hand. "I'll bring out my Summoned Skull, in attack mode. Destroy her face-down monster."

"Oh Solomon, if it's good enough for you..." Twilight said, flipping her Mirror Force "Say goodbye to your little skeleton."

"... I'll admit, I should have seen that coming. Good move. But it'll take more than that for you to win. I end my turn."

"Thanks." Twilight drew a card, and smiled as she added it to her hand. "Now, time for you to meet one of my powerhouses. I summon Fortune Lady Dark to the field in Attack mode."

"Another new card? What does this one do?" Solomon said, looking across the desk, trying to read the cards text upside down.

"For now, it's a level 5 spellcaster, with 2,000 Attack and Defence points. It has another ability, but you don't need to worry about that right now, she can't use it just yet."

"For now? Ahh, I see now, a level increaser. This new deck of yours is just full of surprises. What happened to the old, batter down the doors mentality?"

"Oh, it's still here. I can hit you just as hard as ever. I just realised that I'd end up in a war of attrition if I did. So I came prepared. Oh, say goodbye to your face-down monster, by the way."

Solomon sighed as he moved his Horn Imp to the graveyard.

She put her Spellbook of Power face-down. "I'll place a card face-down, and then it's your move."

Wait, attrition... That's risky for her... Yugi thought. *Grandpa's deck is pretty much built around waiting to draw certain cards...*

You mean Exodia? Twilight's monster will just continue to get stronger. It would only take two more turns for her Fortune Lady to be stronger than everything else in that deck. With his magic cards sealed off, Exodia might be his only option...

So, Grandpa doesn't have long to draw the cards he needs, even if he doesn't realise it.

Considering what else is in that deck of hers, no, he does not. We should probably be paying attention to the duel, though, Yugi.

Oh, right...

"...End my turn." Solomon said, his Koumori Dragon now face-down on the field.

Twilight prepared to draw a card. "And now that it's my Standby Phase, my Fortune Lady goes to Level 6, and gains an extra 400 Attack and Defence points." She then drew her card, and added it to her hand, taking out her Solemn Wishes. "I place one card face-down, and attack your face-down monster. Your move."

Solomon drew his card "Fine, I'll just set another monster in defence mode, and end my turn." He placed his Battle Steer face down on the table.

"Then I'll let my Fortune Lady grow to Level 7, before I get started. Now, let's see..." Twilight looked over her hand "I think I'll summon my Solitaire magician, and attack this monster with my Fortune Lady Dark. And, as a result of my attack, I'll activate my Solemn Wishes Trap. It's your move."

Solomon moved his hand to his chin, and sat in thought. "This is a lot more challenging than I thought it would be... I owe you an apology, Josie."

"Thank you. It is meant to be a major step up from my old one."

"However, I'm not going to go down without a fight. My comeback starts here. I place this monster face-down, and end my turn." He placed his Sangan face-down as soon as he drew it.

"That's exactly what you did last turn..." Twilight said, puzzled. "No matter, my Fortune Lady Dark gains another level, taking her to over 3,000 attack and defence points, and I get an extra 500 life points in my draw phase, bringing me up to 2,500." Twilight placed her new

Swords of Revealing Light on the field face-down "Now, as a contingency, I'll place this face-down, then get my Fortune Lady to take out your new monster again."

"Thank you, I needed that..." Solomon smiled, as he moved his Sangan to the Graveyard. "Now I can add a monster to my hand, as long as their attack is 1500 or less."

"So you get a weak monster? How could that help?"

"Maybe it's weak by itself, but the Left Arm of the Forbidden One is another of the pieces I need to win this duel."

"Pieces? Maybe you could assemble something, but you just gave me exactly what I need to win. Still, it's your move now, go ahead."

"Gladly." Solomon looked over his hand. She must be bluffing. As long as I can keep laying monsters in defence mode, she can't touch my life points... What is she up to?

After a minute or two, he finally decided on his move. He placed his Rude Kaiser face-down "I'll put another monster in defence mode, and end my turn."

"Still struggling to get what you need? I know I'm not. First my cards effects activate, taking me to 3,000 life points, and taking my Fortune Lady to Level 9. Then I'll play Monster Reborn. And I think I'll target your Sangan."

"What use is he to you?" Solomon said, puzzled. "He's not as strong as your Magicians, and his effect is useless to you unless he's destroyed."

"On the contrary, this will complete my strategy. I activate my Solitaire Magician's ability. By sacrificing three levels from my Fortune Lady Dark, I can destroy one monster on the field."

"And how does that differ from attacking my mo... wait, the field?"

"And now you know. I'll destroy the Sangan I just revived to bring Fortune Lady Light into my hand." Twilight smiled at Solomon as she shuffled her deck. "Since I weakened my Fortune Lady, I'll be careful and skip my attack this turn, so it's your move."

I'm out of options... Heart of the cards, please, don't fail me now. Solomon closed his eyes, and drew a card. His shoulders visibly slumped at the result. He placed his Celtic Guardian face-down. "I place a monster face-down, and end my turn."

"Now where has all that enthusiasm gone?" Twilight smiled, as she pulled another card from her deck. "My life points increase to 3,500, and my Fortune Lady regains one of her lost levels. Now, I summon my Fortune Lady Light, and activate my Solitaire Magician's effect. My Fortune Lady Dark loses another three levels, and my Fortune Lady Light goes to my graveyard."

"Wait, you went through all that effort to sacrifice it immediately?" Solomon's face dropped, as the realisation dawned. "It has another effect, doesn't it?"

"You catch on quick. I get to Special Summon another Fortune Lady from my deck whenever Fortune Lady Light is destroyed by a Card Effect. And I choose my Fortune Lady Earth." Twilight placed the card on the field, and began to shuffle her deck again. "Just so you know, she starts at Level 6, giving her 2400 attack and defence, and she causes 400 life point damage every time she destroys a monster. Then, when she does, my Fortune Lady Dark's effect can activate, allowing me to resurrect my Fortune Lady Light when your monster is destroyed."

"...Allowing you to sacrifice her again, to bring out another Fortune Lady..."

"Until my field is full of monsters. But I won't even need that many. This duel will end on my next turn. But, until then, say goodbye to your new monster, and 400 of your life points, dropping you to 1,600.

Finally, let's welcome back my Fortune Lady Light, in defence mode. It's your move, Solomon."

Solomon sighed and leant back in his chair. "Congratulations, Josie, if you're telling the truth. I draw a card and end my turn, since there really is nothing I can do. Let me see what you have in store."

"Alright, my Fortune Ladies all gain their boosts. Now, my Fortune Ladies all get stronger, and I draw my card, raising my life points to 4,000. I switch Fortune Lady Light to Attack mode, and use her to attack your face-down defence monster."

Solomon scratched his chin, trying to fathom out the previous move. "You failed to destroy my Rude Kaiser. I don't know how you expected that to work, with such a weak monster. You lose 1,200 life points for that."

"That's easy, it wasn't meant to. I just needed to get one of your monsters face up, and hope it was strong enough."

"Strong enough?" Solomon asked, more confused than ever. "Strong enough for what?"

"Just sit back and watch, this is going to be fun. I activate Solitaire Magician's ability, lowering my Fortune Lady Dark three more levels, in order to destroy my Fortune Lady Light. And now, I get to Special Summon my Fortune Lady Fire. Her special effect activates when she is special summoned in Attack mode, like she just was. She destroys one of your face-up monsters, and deals damage to you equal to that monsters attack power. Which, with Rude Kaiser's 1800 attack power, should be enough to finish you off." Twilight waited for a minute, before breaking the uncomfortable silence "So, how did I do?"

"Josie, I didn't land an attack. The only damage you took was self inflicted, and even that was intentional. I was forced to rely on a gamble to have any chance, and it didn't pay off. If you want my honest opinion, I was struggling the moment you played that Secret

Village. I'll need to call Pegasus and make sure there's nothing preventing this, but I honestly doubt it. Good luck in Duellist Kingdom, you deserve to be there."

After a few minutes, Solomon headed back through to the front of the shop, as Twilight began to reassemble her deck. "Well, I guess that's one disaster averted. So, what do we do now, sit back and relax?"

Yami waited until he could hear Solomon's voice drifting through the doorway from the shop floor, before closing the separating door. "You need to be a little more careful, you were lucky he still went ahead with the duel after that old timer comment. I may not have known you long, but that doesn't seem like you."

"I called him an old timer?" Twilight asked, a puzzled look spreading across her face.

"Right before the duel started." Yami replied, sitting across the table from her. "Do you seriously not remember?"

Twilight shook her head.

"Does this sort of thing happen to you often when you loop?"

Twilight continued to shake her head. "No, but Tristan said something, when we went to visit Nyx. He said a couple of the things I said reminded him of Joey."

"Well, Joey should know by now not to say that sort of thing to Solomon face to face, but he never was the brightest of the group to begin with..."

"So it is something he might say?"

Téa nodded in agreement. "It sounds about right, but that still doesn't make any sense." She turned to Yami. "If Twilight is here instead of Joey, shouldn't Joey, you know, not be here?"

"I must admit, I cannot recall anything similar to this from any loop I have been in."

"But what about you and Yugi, could it be anything like that?"

"I sincerely doubt it. Yugi and I are extremely closely linked, so much that even once we began to loop we could not be separated. You and Joey have no such bond. Tell me, does anything feel wrong in any way?"

"Other than not realising what I've said one time? Nothing at all."

"Then I say we leave it there for now. It may get confusing for anyone else Awake that we run into, but I doubt it will be a major problem in the short term. If you start talking in a Brooklyn accent all the time, then we should try to figure out what's going on. Does that sound fair?"

"Sure, I'm fine with that." Twilight rose from her seat. "But you still haven't answered my first question – where do we go from here?"

"Well, once Solomon tells us whether you're in or not, we should make sure to be packed early. Other than that, make sure Josie was up to date with her homework before you arrived? You don't want to be kept out of the tournament for so..." Yami started, but was cut off by the clattering of the chair Twilight had been leaning on falling to the ground.

"Oh god, no! I'm going to miss the tourn..." was all they could make out from her insane rambling before the front door swung shut behind her as she started to run home.

"She needs to sort out her priorities..." Yami said, his mind still trying to figure out exactly what had happened.

"You said it..." Téa nodded in agreement.

6.3 (burningclaw2)

Jaden was mildly confused and annoyed with this Loop.

First of all, Riding Duel's had apparently come out way earlier than they usually would. This was most likely due to Yugi and Atem convincing Kaiba and Pegasus to start up the D-Wheelers and Speed Spells. That could be fun and it was just a small shock that could be expected.

No, the confusing thing was the fact that all the cards were basically the card artwork outlined to show the type of card it was. What made this annoying was the fact that apparently the lessons now included details on each and every cards lore and effect.

Even more annoying was the fact he was expected to stay awake in class if he wanted to be allowed to duel anyone. Why would he need to stay awake during a class about Kuriboh's effect—everyone and their grandmother would know that!

This was compounded on the fact that students didn't have their own decks in this Loop and were only allowed to have cards that they had passed exams for. While this made the Obelisk's even more annoying, a lot of the time it wasn't just because of rare cards but the fact that they could access those cards due to grades.

So not only did he have to memorize a lot of cards he would most likely never use—okay, he might use some of these—but he couldn't use his Elemental Hero's, as they had yet to appear in class and he could not expect an exam on them until after that happened. He also needed to pass the other exams so he could keep up his duel records or else he'd be expelled!

Thus Jaden Yuki, for the first time in what seemed like an eternity, ***actually studied.***

6.4 (Gamer A, continuation of 5.7)

Doma's Chaos Duel disks and Seal of Orichalcos both have the power to make the monsters they summon real, not just holograms, Yugi reflected, trying to fill the empty space the loss of Atem and his commentary left in his mind. *Joey told me before that Valon's deck is filled with Armor monsters that he wears, so that he can beat down his enemies with his own two hands. This is the first time I've seen it happen up close though.*

Win or lose, Ishizu was never going to come out of that fight unscathed.

The short boy pried open the door to the hospital's waiting room, where his friends were waiting for him to bring back news.

"Well, it's not as bad as it looks. But it's still bad," Yugi informed them. "And of course, waiting for her to recover isn't an option now."

"I never knew that guy was so brutal. Was that what fighting him was like normally, Joey?" Téa asked.

"Yeah, but I've been through worse," Joey answered. "He normally doesn't get a chance like this, though. Plus, Mai usually mellows him out a bit. Speaking of which, she's fine."

"I thought so," Yugi said, "Since she wasn't marooned in the shadow realm this time, she doesn't have enough trauma for Dartz to get a grip on." I wonder who he's sending to assassinate Pegasus this time... Or maybe he won't bother. "Sol Chevalsky" won't be any help for the three dragons...

"Wasn't Reshef just Alexander's monster?" asked Tristan. "He was tough, but I don't think it could really destroy the world personally like Ishizu said."

"This one can, unless we beat and seal him first," Yugi began outlining. "To seal him, we need the god cards, and to get the god cards back, we need six or seven millennium items and someone who can use them properly. Usually, we leave that to Ishizu.

Meanwhile, the Great Leviathan isn't strong enough to appear in the sky yet, even just as that Eye. But Dartz and his men will be ready to drain and steal the god cards again when we try to use them. As for the Three dragons... That's on Dark Magician Girl's schedule."

"Plus, Pegasus is brainwashed, and still has his Eliminators. They're out looking for the items too," Joey pointed out. "No free trip to America for us this time, let alone Canada, China, Italy... And who knows whether someone else will show up to join in."

"I think we should go find the millennium puzzle first," Téa said, "The Pharaoh is one of us. We should get him back first."

"Nice idea, but the Puzzle is the one Item we never find before someone else does," Yugi said sadly. "We have no idea where it was sent to."

"Kaiba then!" Téa shouted. "Even he can't just ignore this! We can ask him for a plane or something. If nothing else, we can warn him about Paradius trying to take his company."

"Yugi! Now isn't the time to get down," Tristan said encouragingly. "Aren't you the King of Games dozens of times over? We're Loopers. We have dozens of new tricks even Dartz doesn't know about. This is just another puzzle for you to solve."

Yugi reviewed the contents of his subspace pocket. "Alright, I think I have a plan..."

6.5 (barryc100588)

Yugi and Kaiba stood opposite each other in Kaiba Corp's Duel Arena. They each shuffled their decks and placed them on their respective deck zones, separating their extra decks from them.

"Ready for our duel, Kaiba?" Yugi asked as he drew his cards.

Kaiba nodded as he drew. "This time, I'll defeat you, Yugi. We'll play with the new Kaiba Corp rules and set Life Points to 4000. High Level Normal Summons require Sacrifices."

Yugi nodded. "You can go first, Kaiba."

Kaiba nodded and drew. "I summon my Hi-Totsume Giant, in Attack Mode." The 1200 Attack Point monster appeared in a flash of light. "I set a card face down and end my turn."

Yugi drew and frowned. "I Normal Summon my Winged Dragon, Guardian of the Fortress #1 in Attack Mode!" The 1400 ATK winged dragon appeared. "I attack your giant with my dragon. Fireball!" The dragon unleashed its fire breath on Kaiba's giant, destroying it and dealing 200 damage to Kaiba (3800). "I set two cards and end my turn."

Kaiba drew a card and looked at it. "I Normal Summon Maiden with Eyes of Blue in Attack Mode."

Yugi looked in surprise as the maiden appeared. "I've never even heard of that card."

Kaiba smirked. "Next, I activate Pot of Greed. This lets me draw twice more." He drew two cards and looked at them. He put one card in his hand and placed the second on his duel field. "I activate Heart of Clear Water and I equip it to my Maiden with Eyes of Blue. Now she cannot be destroyed in battle. Plus, since I targeted her for a card effect, I can Special Summon a Blue Eyes White Dragon from my hand, deck, or graveyard." Kaiba searched his deck and pulled a card, placing it on the field. The dragon appeared as he shuffled his deck. "Now, I attack your dragon with my Blue Eyes! Burst Stream of Destruction!" The dragon opened its mouth and unleashed a burst of energy, destroying Yugi's Winged dragon and dealing 1600 points of damage to him (2400). "end my turn."

Yugi drew and frowned. "I activate Pot of Greed and draw twice." Yugi looked at the cards he drew. "I Normal Summon Obnoxious

Celtic Guardian in Attack Mode." The monster appeared. "I attack your maiden with my warrior." The Celtic warrior charged forward, sword raised.

Kaiba laughed. "I activate my maiden's other effect!"

Yugi looked surprised. "It has another effect?!"

"When my maiden is declared as an attack target, I can negate that attack, switch my maiden's battle mode, and Special Summon a Blue Eyes White Dragon. So go ahead, Maiden." The maiden glowed blue as the Celtic warrior stopped advancing. She then took a defensive stance. Kaiba searched his deck and placed a card on the field. The dragon appeared as he shuffled.

Yugi looked at his hand. "I set a card and end my turn.

Kaiba drew a card and smiled. "I activate Polymerization. With this, I can fuse the two Blue Eyes on the field with the one in my hand to Fusion Summon my Blue Eyes Ultimate Dragon!" The three-headed dragon appeared from the fusion vortex. "And I'm attacking your warrior with my dragon. Ultimate Burst!" Each of the dragon's heads unleashed a stream of energy that twisted together as it headed for the Celtic warrior.

Yugi smirked. "I activate a trap! Magic Cylinder! This card takes your attack and redirects it at your life points as effect damage." The two cylinders appeared and absorbed the attack before firing it back at Kaiba.

Kaiba then smirked. "I activate a Counter trap! Barrel Behind the Door! This card takes any card effect that targets my Life Points and redirects the effect to my opponent." The gun appeared, ready to absorb the effect.

Yugi's smirk didn't disappear. "I activate a Counter Trap to your Counter Trap! Trap Jammer! This card negates the activation and effect of one trap card and destroys it." The gun exploded into pixels

and the effect continued unimpeded, striking Kaiba's duel platform as he stood there in shock. The duel arena turned off as his Life Points hit 0.

"I can't believe I lost… again!"

6.6 (burningclaw2)

Great, thought Jonathan. This Loop he had Woken just as he was heading into Ogre Street. *At least I'll be able to befriend Speedwagon soon.*

As Jonathan walked through the slum area, he soon found a variance to the norm. *Something's wrong. Normally Speedwagon and his friends would've attacked me by now.*

Then, as he neared where the poison dealer usually was, he suddenly heard a scream of absolute terror.

"What?!" Jonathan exclaimed, quickly running towards the source of the scream. Upon reaching his destination, he was shocked by what he saw.

Standing in front of the two thugs that usually attacked him alongside Speedwagon was a young man with tri-colored hair and a chain around his neck. As the young man turned to face him, Jonathan saw a golden puzzle attached to the chain like a pendant. The thugs were both on the ground, shivering in fright.

"Who are you? What happened to those two?" Jonathan asked, mentally preparing himself should this person turn hostile for some reason.

"Generally, it is polite to give your name first," the young man replied, a slight smirk adorning his face and confidence oozing from his form, while Jonathan's eyes widened.

Gah! How could I forget that?

"I'm Jonathan Joestar," he introduced, "though my friends call me JoJo. Now can you be so kind as to answer my questions?"

"Very well. My name is Atem. As for what happened to those two, they are simply recovering from the effects of the Penalty Game they had to endure. They'll live and come out better for it," replied the young man.

"Penalty Game? And how long will it be till they have recovered?" Jonathan inquired, worried about Speedwagon's friends.

"A form of judgment which differs from person to person depending on the theme of the game and the crime the receiver has committed. For those two since the punishment was only a small illusion they should recover within a day at most," Atem answered before commenting, "Though someone *Awake* could tell how bad it might be."

"You're a Looper then," he stated, at the same time thinking, *Thank God those two will be all right, though it is disappointing that Speedwagon won't be here.* The thought that his friend wouldn't be here this time around saddened Jonathan a little.

"Indeed," Atem replied. "I and my partner." All at once, he was bathed in a golden light, causing Jonathan to cover his eyes. When the light disappeared, 'Atem' appeared to have lost several inches in height and his features looked slightly softer than before.

Then 'Atem' spoke, his voice noticeably higher in pitch and warmer in tone. "Hello JoJo. I'm Yugi Muto, Atem's partner and friend."

Two personalities?! Jonathan thought in shock. *Or is it something else? Yugi and Atem seem so different, but at the same time similar.*

"In case you're wondering, Atem is a 3000 year old spirit who resides in my Millennium Puzzle. Though I have had a few Loops where I

was Atem's reincarnation," Yugi explained, having noticed Jonathan's shock.

"Huh? How does that work? How do you two co-exist so easily?" Jonathan asked, curious.

"Atem was an Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh, who had used magic to seal himself inside the Millennium Puzzle to lock away a great evil. Using the Puzzles' magic, we can switch which of us is in control of my body, or merge together for a while."

"Ah. That might explain things. Anyway, it's nice to meet you Yugi, Atem." Jonathan held out his hand. He himself had dealt with many strange things over his own adventures.

"Nice to meet you too, JoJo," replied Yugi as he took Jonathan's hand, starting another YuJo friendship.

6.7 (dragonraptyr)

"Ahem."

Yugi Woke up, putting the last piece of the puzzle in place. Usually, his room was empty aside from Atem, who materialized to hang curiously over his shoulder. This time, the room was occupied by approximately six feet of ibis-headed Egyptian god.

"Er, hello." Yugi said awkwardly, even as he started checking his in-loop memories. Maybe this was a variant with the various gods being real?

"Greetings, Yugi Muto and Atem, Co-Anchors 343-ER-44554-TYB. I am Thoth, god of knowledge and baboons, and your local service maintenance router currently acting in an advisory capacity due to a catastrophic Y-class malfunction of system 56-B, colloquially known as the "Yu-Gi-Oh" Branch of the Yggdrasil system. I have been made aware that you are currently informed of these events, and will

update you at the nearest convenience regarding any new breakthroughs or errors that arise during your stay."

Yugi and Atem looked at each other. "To be honest, I didn't understand half of what you said." Atem offered. "Could you put it any more simply?"

Thoth blinked. "You wish me to be more concise than I already have been?"

"It would be nice."

"Very well." Thoth mused. "I am not readily given to such a task. My duty is the collection and dispensation of knowledge, after all, but I will do my utmost this one time. I. Am. Your. Admin. Hello. If. There. Is. A. Problem. I. Will. Tell. You." Thoth spoke slowly, enunciating carefully.

Yugi and Atem sighed mentally, Atem sending out a ping to answer one that Joey was sending out. "Thanks for the update." Yugi smiled. "Are you going to stay?"

"Negative." Thoth shook his head, clacking his beak impatiently. "I have three other individual Anchor-Configurations to inform, as well as all of the sub-local individuals and loop-aware individuals, among other tasks. I thank you for your gracious offer, however."

With that, Thoth disappeared, as if he had never been there, leaving the Co-Anchors looking at each other in confusion.

"It's a baseline loop, right?" Atem asked.

"Yeah." Yugi replied. "Checkers?"

"Sure."

6.8

Yugi walked slowly through the halls of Domino High. So far the loop had been pretty good. Seto and Joey weren't awake, but he had managed to keep everything baseline so far. He wanted to see if he could beat Pegasus without the Mind Shuffle technique himself. The only unusual thing this loop was that Bakura hadn't gone for the Dungeon Wolrd game... but that tended to be random more often than not anyway. However, both he and Atem's minds were on something else, a letter that had shown up the night before from one Mr. T. Hoth. It simply read:

Yugi and Atem

Watch out

Thoth.

That had scared Atem. He had pointed out to Yugi that Thoth was the Egyptian God of Writing, Magic and other important duties, as well as being one of Ra's very own Right Hand Gods. The fact that he personally contacted them to give them a warning had them both on edge... but Yugi was still confused.

Atem, why are you so worried that Thoth left us a warning? He thought. *Surely a quick warning is a smart idea isn't it? Especially if this guy is supposed to be our Admin.*

It's because Thoth is supposed to support the balance of Good and Evil, Atem responded. *It's because he's been silent even though we've fought Zorc many times, even Nightshroud in that fused Loop. It's because Thoth, of all Gods, is long winded!* The Pharaoh's mental voice sounded slightly more panicked with each sentence.

Yugi stepped down and a retort died mid thought as he heard a click. He looked down and saw he had just stepped on a wire strung across the hallway. He could hear a faint beeping coming from the nearby lockers. Most people were in class, none seemed to have noticed what had happened... except for Ryou Bakura. Bakura's

gentle face looked up at Yugi... and then smirked, the Millennium Ring phasing in around his neck.

"Shi—"

A powerful explosion filled the hallways. Yugi was incinerated in an instant, with Joey, Téa and Tristan who had been waiting near the door badly hurt by the explosion. Even Bakura himself had some burns, but nowhere near as bad as they did. The damage he was suffering was worth it, though, to have finally—

That hasn't happened yet. For someone who can take me over with ease, you are quite arrogant.

Bakura shook himself out of his fantasy... and frowned. He could see clear as day that the Pharaoh had switched with his lighter half, and was... using shadow magic to send the bombs to another realm where they'd explode harmlessly. He kept up the illusion of Ryou Bakura even as Yugi and the Pharaoh switched back mid stride, as if nothing had happened. Even as Bakura started thinking of his back-up plan, Yugi passed by his desk... and left a note.

The Roof. After School. You want the puzzle and revenge on me, then don't involve innocents.

Bakura frowned even as he wrote down his own note. Of course he couldn't hand it back at first with class on. He waited until a break between classes and slowly walked over to Yugi's desk, casually talking to them as 'Ryou'. He left behind the note which simply read. *Why should I leave them out of this?*

It wasn't until the lunch break that he got his reply. Yugi had passed by the desk and left another note. He looked at it... and then, looking around to make sure no-one was watching, scowled as the paper caught alight with dark flame.

The Pharaoh had written down: *Because you are better than my father.* And while the side of him that was Zorc was terrified that he

knew so much this early, the side of him that was the thief king was furious in that the Pharaoh was RIGHT.

Yugi sighed as he walked up towards the roof access. The others were heading home and he had made up an excuse to stay at the school. That had been too close before, and if it hadn't been for Thoth's warning, the loop would've ended. Bakura was probably looping and his planting of the explosives had been genius... the fact that the explosion had, for a brief second, happened was equally scary. To prevent the explosion the two of them had been forced to briefly channel the magic of the puzzle, activating the card Mischief of the Time Goddess which made the bombs accelerate forward a couple of minutes, meaning they were only scrap. They had still banished the pieces to the Shadow Realm if only to prevent someone finding them. However, Bakura was too dangerous to have looping as he was right now, if he was looping at all... he needed to fix that and fast. Thankfully the two of them had thought... and both had a plan.

Bakura smirked as Yugi approached him. He no longer even attempted to disguise himself as his other half while the Ring appeared around his neck.

"Step aside, Yugi. As entertaining as it might be to torture you, I imagine that your precious Pharaoh tires of these games," he said with a touch of irritation, the smirk still in place.

Yugi simply glared at the twisted thief king. "He does... which is what made it so hard to convince him that I should be the one to take you down." As soon as Yugi finished, he ducked with a startled cry, narrowly dodging a knife that had been tossed straight at him. Bakura was scowling now, almost snarling.

"And what makes you think you have the right?" he growled.

"Because you go after the Pharaoh for vengeance on a dead man," Yugi replied. "You made it personal to me when you attempted to kill my friends." As he spoke, shadows seemed to seep out of the

Puzzle almost like smoke as the two were rapidly encased in an orb of the stuff. "So I think it's time we played a different kind of game."

The side of him that was Zorc was screaming in confusion. *How does the runt have such power so quickly? How does he know so much? Why is he not dead? KILL HIM!*

No .

No?

No . Bakura would not outright kill Yugi. His own lighter half was pathetic and weak... and yet this boy stood before them, wielding the pure power of the shadows themselves and even suggesting a Shadow Game without the Pharaoh. If nothing else, this would be entertaining. This Yugi... reminded him of the one he had fought. Of the one who never backed down despite his friend being controlled.

He would crush that spirit of his.

"Fine then. What Shadow Game do you suggest?"

Yugi grinned... and reached behind him. He seemed to be almost reaching into a pocket... and pulled out a quartet of large books. Had his mastery of magic progressed this far, to store objects within a space that should not be large enough to hold them? "I heard that Ryou liked roleplaying games, so I thought our Shadow Game could be one. How does Dungeons and Dragons sound?"

Bakura blinked... and then laughed. "Even if I agreed... it's rather unsporting to simply have it be the Dungeon Master and a single player, isn't it?" He asked.

"Two." Bakura looked to his left, and almost stumbled back. Sitting there was Ryou, smiling as he took the character sheet Yugi offered him.

"Actually, three," Yugi corrected. As he did, Bakura blinked... and then held his head, feeling a pain almost like a splitting migraine, literally. With a cry that echoed throughout the dark void, it suddenly stopped. Bakura looked down at himself. No longer was he taking on a more menacing version of Ryou's appearance but rather the tanned skin he had back in the days of Egypt. He heard a groan to his right and turned toward the sound. What he saw was another copy, looking a lot more like Bakura had been before except that his eyes glowed red...

The red eyed Bakura glared at Yugi. "What trickery is this?" He asked. "How dare you, a mere mortal, think to pull me into my own domain! I am Zorc!" Bakura, the thief king, was stunned. This Shadow Game was supposedly strong enough to manifest the part of him that was Zorc into the physical plane? But at the same time it made sense... his head felt more clear now. Not the dual voices that it usually was. Just his own.

Yugi glared back at Zorc, a glint in his eyes as he did. "Shadow Game: Souls and Sorcerers. We will be playing a short adventure with each soul in the body being challenged taking part. If you die in the Shadow Game, then you receive the Penalty Game," Yugi explained as he handed Zorc and Bakura character sheets as well as the player's handbook. "Make your characters... and we will begin." Zorc looked murderous... but as he reached forward to strike out, the shadows seemed to pulse. "And no cheating," Yugi added.

Bakura took a look at the sheet and drew upon Ryou's own knowledge of the game... a Rogue sounded fun. But he was also concerned. Just moments ago he would've wanted to murder Yugi for daring to restrict him like this... just how much of that was Zorc?

Yugi set up the gaming mat and three figures for the Bakuras. And then they began.

"And with that the Dragon lunges at Zorc, it's mouth open and glowing." The four had been playing the Shadow Game for hours now, each having used a higher level character to start with, and

were just now fighting a young white dragon, one that challenged even them. It was relatively easy for Bakura's thief as the dragon relied mostly on being dodged, something he could do quite well and had been doing the entire dungeon so far. Ryou's cleric wasn't faring as well due to having to take most of the hits for the party, but was constantly healing himself so nothing bad had happened...

Zorc, on the other hand, had chosen a Sorcerer and had been incredibly risky in his moves, using spell after spell and ignoring any possible assistance from the other parts of Bakura. At the moment he held a dice in his hands and was sweating. If he failed the roll then his spellcaster would be destroyed and him along with it. There was the chance he'd get out of the way before the dragon fired its breath weapon though...

"Roll your reflex save Zorc," Bakura commented. "It's just a game after all."

Zorc glared at Bakura... and then smirked. "That's right... it is a game. A shadow game... that I won't lose!" He called on what little power this body had as Diabound took form, dark energy gathering to it as he would use it to destroy the puzzle holder! "Diabound, a-." Zorc stopped as he felt a sharp pain enter him and suddenly losing his breath. He looked behind himself slowly and coughed as a bit of blood dribbled out. Standing behind him holding a knife that was buried into Zorc's back was the thief king himself, a look of rage on his face as Diabound above them was likewise impaled on the claws of Dark Necrofear. "W...What?" Zorc coughed out.

"You twisted me. Used me. Made me into nothing better than a puppet," Bakura stated slowly. "I could respect that... but then you had the gall to twist what I wanted. I didn't want vengeance on those who stole my village away from me. I just wanted to destroy the Pharaoh so you could let the whole world burn like Kul Elna."

"And it was a purpose!" Zorc yelled. "And yet you betray me?"

Ryou stood up at this. "What is there to betray but the fact that you already betrayed him?" Ryou countered. "Made him into a way for you to enact your evil ways."

"Well, I say no more, Zorc!" Bakura continued with a snarl. "You might be strong, but only a fragment of you is part of me. And the shadows make you as mortal as the rest of us."

Zorc paused... and then laughed, a horrid, raspy laugh. "What are you laughing at, Zorc?" Yugi asked. He hadn't moved during all this, but a proud smile was on his face none the less. "He's right, you're going to die here."

Zorc smirked as Diabound glowed with the dark energy from before. "Fools." He spoke not with Bakura's borrowed voice but that of his monstrous true form. "I may die... but you forget who controls these shadows... the Pharaoh will die with me!" Zorc declared as Diabound opened it's maw.

"Motou!"

"Yugi!"

The energy blast sped towards Yugi... and in that moment he reflected that he should have thought of this. There wasn't enough time to switch with the Pharaoh and form a Defense and resetting the loop like this could cause more damage than good. He didn't want that. He wanted to win this. It was his game, Ryou was his friend, and Bakura deserved a better chance.

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The blast blazed forward... and then a massive dark fist slammed into it, dispersing the blast. Yugi blinked and looked up, seeing Zombiestein standing before him just as it faded away. Zorc looked on in disbelief... and succumbed, his arms going limp and finally dropping the dice. As it rolled to a stop, Yugi looked over slowly and shook his head. "Well what do you know, he dodged it."

The two item holders found themselves back on the school roof, bathed in the amber light of the setting sun. Their darker halves stood beside them, incorporeal as ever.

"So, what is your plan with me, Pharaoh? To have me destroyed like I just destroyed Zorc?" Bakura asked.

Atem shook his head. "That was never my plan, Thief King. It wouldn't help anyway... I'm sure the two of you have noticed events are repeating themselves?"

"I assumed that Zorc was playing tricks on me... so we really have gone back in time?" Ryou asked.

Bakura snorted. "Clearly. I still have the ring, but not the eye or the rod. I didn't know you were strong enough to pull that off, Pharaoh."

"Oh yes, I'm able to turn back the clock and make time repeat!" Atem declared as he posed dramatically. "For I am the great and powerful —"

"As well as modest," Yugi interrupted.

"Pharaoh Atem!" Atem finished as he gave Yugi a dirty look... and coughed. "Ok... it's more that reality is... broken. We're being made to repeat things over and over again while they fix the multiverse... and that's only the barest part of it."

Bakura opened his mouth to ask a question... but then Ryou cleared his throat. "As much as I want to know more... perhaps we should go somewhere else? It'll be dark soon." At that, the other three looked out... the sun was about to set.

"We can go to Kame Games. Grandpa always likes me having friends around, no matter how odd they get," Yugi suggested with a smile.

Bakura smirked even as the ring glowed. Instead of the forced possession though the two seemed to swap places much like Yugi and Atem's own method. "Fine then, we'll meet you there in a half an hour... I want to have a walk," Bakura said, even as he walked past the two. "And for once... I know it's me who wants the walk."

Yugi and Atem smiled as Bakura passed by... but as the door to the roof closed Yugi leaned against a wall and rubbed his hand. "What happened back there with Zombiestein?" Atem asked.

"I don't know," Yugi admitted. "I mean, I got him in a loop with Astral... but I haven't used him since." He let go and looked at the back of his left hand, with the skin seeming to be slightly torn in the shape of a 22. "And I didn't even use his card... even Dark Mist is supposed to need that."

Atem examined the mark. "Is there something we don't know about the Numbers and the way they work in the loops?" He asked.

Yugi shrugged as he pulled himself upright, tapping his pants... and then tapping some more, reaching into his pockets. "That's strange... my wallet is missing... where is..." He stopped and looked at the closed door. "Atem... you don't think..."

"Yes"

"Something so minor though..."

"Yes"

"And I should-"

"Yes. We might catch up before he finds a way to spend your money," Atem noted with a smirk, even as Yugi opened the door and ran after the spirit that was known as 'Thief King' for a reason.

Chapter 7

7.1 (Krika)

"Such worthless trash has little reason to exist. Like most things, they have no value. Why do you hold onto such pathetic things that do nothing but hold you back?"

This loop was weird. For starters, Yuma hadn't seen Shark anywhere around, although he had responded to the ping, albeit with an odd … filter, almost. Astral's had felt the same way. The fact that neither of them had popped in from their respective worlds was a bit odd, but he figured that they were either getting the lay of this variant, or setting up things for later down the line. The big change that he had noticed was that this Loop had Kyoji Yagumo as the school bully, although he didn't seem to have the genocidal tendencies that he usually had in that one variant loop. He'd played along, and things had proceeded fairly normally, although it had been Caswell that he'd ended up defending from Kyoji.

He kept to the deck he'd Woken up with, and was currently on the losing end of Kyoji, who was currently staring emotionlessly at him, with the massive form of Number 73: Abyss Splash floating over him.

Yuma grinned at his opponent, pulling himself to his feet from where the Number's attack had thrown him. "Because these are the cards that I've been dueling with since I started." *Especially since I replaced the cards that I have in my baseline Deck with my Looping copies.* "These are the cards that have had my back since day one, just like I've had theirs. Cards are a duelist's soul, and I'm not going to throw any of them away! Whenever I duel with them, I can feel the flow, and when I'm feeling the flow, there's no going back!" He grabbed the top card of his deck, and pulled it off, flipping it over to glance at it.

"I'll start off by summoning Gagaga Magician from my hand, and then activate Gagagawind, summoning Gagaga Girl as well!" The robed Spellcaster took to the field, followed by his apprentice.

Kyoji frowned. "Pitiful."

Yuma shook his head. "Not at all! I activate Gagaga Magician's special ability, which can change his level to three! And then I activate Gagaga Girl's ability as well! Normally she's level three, but Gagagawind changed her level to four. Fortunately for me, her ability lets her level become that of Gagaga Magician's - in this case, also three!" The two spellcasters shimmered for a moment.

Kyoji nodded slowly. "You intend to try to prove that you possess worth with another Xyz Summon."

Yuma grinned. "That's right! I overlay my two monsters in order to build the Overlay Network and Xyz Summon!" The two monsters turned into glowing purple orbs of light, before falling into the portal. "Come on out, Muzurhythm the String Djinn!" The guitar-wielding monster appeared, strumming a jaunty tune.

Kyoji's expression fell slightly. "Your desperate attempts merely result in a feeble monster."

Yuma shook his head with a smile. "But you forgot about Gagaga Girl's special ability! When used to make an Xyz Monster with another Gagaga monster, she can reduce the Attack Points of a single monster you control to zero, like your Number there!"

Kyoji took a step back as his monster shuddered and knelt, it's power draining away. "Unfortunately, my life points are still too great for you to overcome. Your efforts have still come to naught."

Yuma chuckled. "Don't you know anything about dueling? Xyz monsters tend to come with effects - such as one that lets my monster double its Attack Points!" Muzurhythm absorbed an Overlay

Unit, and grew in size, taking a few experimental strums on its instrument.

"Now, while your Number may survive, it's effect is useless without Attack Points, and your life points won't be around! Muzurhythm, attack with Rhythmic String!"

Before Kyoji could respond, the Djinn struck a few power cords, sending waves of energy across the dueling field and sending the duelist flying over backwards as his Life Points hit zero.

Yuma chuckled and removed the Duel Gazer from his head. "Hey, that was a good duel! We should do-" he cut off when he realized that not only was Abyss Splash not disappearing with the VR dueling realm, but he could still see it without the Gazer. It stared at him for a moment, before collapsing into a ball of energy, which streaked across the field and impacted the Emperor's Key, which suddenly exploded with light.

When it died down, he found himself once more standing before a gate. This one, however, was covered in red crystals, with a rather familiar symbol on it.

"...The Barian's Gateway…." he muttered, before grinning, and running straight at it. "Well, let's find out what this Loop is all about!"

As soon as his outstretched fingers touched the gate, the chains shattered, and he felt himself flying backwards from the rush of energy. Unlike how things normally went, he found himself landing on the small pathway before the Gate. Looking up, he saw the door had closed, and standing before it was a very familiar figure.

"I blame you for this, Yuma. I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I'm blaming you."

Yuma grinned as he stood up, mindful of the thin path. "Come on Shark, I bet you're excited to find out what it's like to be Astral for a Loop!"

The Barian glared at him. "Astral is probably the villain in this loop. Or supposed to be, anyway. Astral World decided that banishing Chaos wasn't good enough - they sealed it away, along with me and my comrades. Take it from me, it's not fun being in those prisons."

Yuma nodded, expression serious. "Right. I'm betting we're going to have to go on some sort of adventure to free them?"

Nasch nodded. "Each of us has a Number that was used as the key to our seal - the Mythyrian Numbers."

"Gotta find 'em all?" Yuma joked.

"We can crack jokes after my comrades and sister have been freed."

"Fine, fine. I don't know if I collected the your Number, though. It just sorta disappeared…"

The Barian cracked a smile for the first time since he'd appeared. "Actually, it turns out that we can lend you our power. And wouldn't you know what form that comes in?" He gestured with his hand, and a glowing card appeared, before flying over to Yuma, who caught it easily.

"...not that I don't trust you, Shark, but wasn't this made by Don Thousand?"

Nasch nodded. "It's not cursed, though— I checked. Besides, you always wanted to give them a spin, didn't you?"

Yuma chuckled, slipping the Number into his deck case. "Oh, you bet I do!"

7.2 (Midnight Crescent)

Twilight the Underdog Chapter 4

"So you're sure you've got everything?" Solomon asked for the third time that morning.

Yugi sighed, as he turned to face his Grandfather once again. "Yes, Grandpa. I have my deck, spare clothes, toothbrush, a towel, my phone and the kitchen sink."

Solomon huffed, and folded his arms. "There's no need to be sarcastic."

"I know, I know. But you don't have to worry. Seriously, I'll be fine. I'll call you every morning, and we'll only be gone for a week." Yugi hugged Solomon, grabbed his bags, and headed for the door. "Bye, Grandpa."

"Goodbye Yugi, and good luck. I can't have you and Josie embarrassing me now, can I?"

Yugi rolled his eyes. As he headed through the door, he called back, "You got it, Grandpa!"

After the door closed behind him, he leant back on the wall.

Are you all right, Yugi? Yami asked.

I'm fine; just wish Grandpa would start looping already, Yugi replied, sighing heavily.

Would you like me to take over for a while?

That'd help. Thanks, Yami.

Just as Yami took Yugi's place, their cab arrived.

"Where to, kid?"

"Domino Harbour, please."

"Sure thing."

When Yami arrived at the harbour, he wasn't too surprised to see that Twilight was already there.

What did shock him was how little she had elected to bring with her. All she had was one backpack, and an ice box.

"Given everything I know about you, I must admit I was expecting cases of books, Josie."

Twilight sighed. She glanced around, amongst the hustle and bustle, trying to figure out how to word this without sounding crazy. Figuring there wasn't any great option, she settled on saying, "That's what a Pocket's for, Yugi." Given the strange gymnastics his eyebrows started to pull, she carried on before he could respond. "So, any idea when Téa will be turning up?"

"She shouldn't be too much longer..."

Almost as though on cue, a car pulled up, and Téa stepped out. "Thanks mom, I'll call you tomorrow!" She called out as the car drove off once again, waving furiously after it. "Hey, Yugi. Hey, Josie."

Yami nodded at her, while Twilight waved.

"Have you spoken to Tristan yet, Josie?"

"Yeah, he said he was getting the train into the city an hour ago. He's going to call me when he gets to the Hospital. I just hope Serenity's OK."

Téa bit her lip, as she looked around the crowd. "Maybe we should get on the ship? We don't want all the good cabins to get taken, do we?"

"That's probably a good idea, actually..." Twilight said, as she picked up her bags. "Let's go."

Twilight and Yami pulled on their gloves, while Tea pulled a lanyard out from her shirt, with a visitor's badge. They passed the guard without incident, and went to register.

"Hmm... Mr Muto and Miss Wheeler... One moment please..." The receptionist said, as she searched through the system for their entries. "Ah, it appears you have rooms reserved..."

A small machine beside her beeped, and she inserted a small plastic card into it. After a few seconds, she removed it, handing it to Yami. "You have been assigned to suite 102, Mr Muto. Please enjoy the cruise, and good luck."

She then repeated the process with Téa, and then Twilight. "Miss Wheeler, you have been assigned to suite 113. Please enjoy the cruise, and good luck."

After placing her bags in her rooms, Twilight met Téa and Yugi in their room.

"Alright, so we're stuck on this boat until tomorrow morning, right?" Twilight asked, as she sat next to Téa.

"That's when we get to the Island, yeah," Yugi replied.

"So is there anything we can do until then?"

"Well, I usually make sure my deck is set up for my first duel – It's almost like a fixed thing. Whenever I come to Duellist Kingdom, I fight the same person first."

"And who's that?"

"Weevil Underwood," Téa said, gagging afterwards.

"I'm going to guess there's a story behind that reaction..."

Yugi took a breath. "There is, but I doubt you'd understand without actually seeing our Baseline. And Yami generally hates running that

part of our Loop as Baseline, if it even occurs. Sometimes, the Loop just randomly skips it."

"All right, I'll take your word for it. So, other than counting to make sure all 60 are there, is there anything to do?"

"There are usually people trading or practicing around the halls, but if you're happy with your deck, I'd advise against it."

"You have anything I could want, and no need to give away my deck?" Twilight ventured.

Yugi nodded. "Most of the other top duellists won't be doing it, unless they want to test a back up deck or something. Which, really, leaves talking, unless either of you have something interesting in your Pocket we could use?"

Téa shook her head. "Not really."

Twilight thought for a few seconds, before something occurred to her. "Actually, I have something I've been meaning to ask you. When I visited Nyx the first time, she mentioned she couldn't use her magic. I've been trying to use it, and I'm having trouble myself." She pulled a notebook out of her coat, and flipped through a few pages. "Levitation is one of the most basic things in my world, so I started with that, and, well, this is the result."

Twilight handed Yugi the notebook. It didn't take long to realise the page was covered with an extremely shaky signature. "Hmm... How does magic work in your world?"

"Unicorns generally just focus on something. Our magic is contained in our horns, but it usually shifts to other appendages when we're in other forms."

"So it's not based on an external focus, then?"

"No, but I do have a lot of them in my Pocket."

"And have you tried any of them yet?"

Twilight shook her head. "I haven't really had enough free time without someone watching. I barely had enough time to pull off this." She indicated the notebook.

"Then try using some of your other foci. Some of them may work, and we don't really have a long list of alternatives to our in-Loop items yet."

"Got it. I should probably go get started."

Twilight got up from the bed, and had almost reached the door when someone started knocking on it.

Twilight opened the door, and had to look down to find the person who had knocked. He had cropped sky blue hair, and gigantic rimmed glasses, with a beetle insignia on the ridge.

"Oh, hello," The newcomer said, looking up at Josie. "My name is Weevil, the new Regional Champion. I was wondering if it's true Yugi Muto is here?"

Twilight debated with herself before responding. "One sec."

She stepped back into the room. "Yugi, that Weevil kid is here. What do you want me to do?"

Yugi and Téa stared at each other for a second, before nodding.

"All right, let him in," Yugi said, before lowering his voice. "But you have to promise that you won't do anything, until he's gone, OK?"

"All right, I promise," Twilight said, dropping her voice to match Yugi's. She headed back over to the door, where Weevil was still waiting. "Come on in."

"Oh, thank you," Weevil said, grinning.

Well, he certainly looks a little strange, but that doesn't mean anything... she thought as he stepped past her.

"Hello, Yugi."

"Hi, Weevil. Well done with the regionals."

"Oh come now, Yugi. The regionals are nothing compared to beating the World Number 1."

"You know about that?" Yugi asked, feigning surprise.

"The whole World knows. The world number 1, humiliated by an amateur. And here you are, in his place."

"I just beat him in one duel, and it was pretty close."

"Don't be modest, Yugi. With your Buster Blader, he never stood a chance." He fidgeted for a second, before asking the question Yugi had been waiting for. "Could I... see it?"

Yugi waited for a few seconds before responding. "Sure, it's over here." He opened up the case for his deck, and slid off the top card. He handed it over to Weevil, and watched as Weevil, as usual, walked around the room, before throwing the card out the window and running. As he left, he gloated, "How will you win without that card now, Yugi?" Before devolving into maniacal laughter.

Yugi rolled his eyes, closing and locking the door. He reached into his Pocket, and pulled out a card which he placed into his deck box. He turned to Twilight, who still seemed to be in a sort of shock from what had happened in front of her. "And that is just one of the reasons we hate Weevil."

"Duly noted..." Twilight said, before checking the time. "Well, I should get back to my room; I think Tristan will be calling me any time now."

"All right. We'll talk again later," Yugi said, as Twilight walked out the door.

"See you later," Téa said.

Twilight walked down the Hallway, and entered her room. She rooted through her bag, and waited for the call.

"-stan? Where'd you go?" Tristan blinked as he woke up.

"I'm here, Nyx. What's wrong?"

"Well, you came in and said you needed to sit down." Nyx said, turning to face Tristan's voice. "And that was an hour ago."

Tristan's face practically shone red, and he smacked his forehead. "Damn, I'm sorry. Apparently, this loop has a lot of paperwork to sort out if you want to visit someone outside of visiting hours. I must have been more tired than I thought. But enough about that, how're you holding up?"

Nyx let her head sink into her pillow. "Better, I guess. I wish Momma was here, but I know why she can't be."

Tristan smiled, as he plugged the last of the cables into his laptop, and waited for the thing to boot up. "Well, everything's set up now, so all we can do is wait for it all to kick off. I did say I'd call Twilight when I got here..."

A knock came at the door, and a nurse walked through a few seconds later. "Hello Serenity, I'm here to run you..." She broke off when she noticed Tristan. "Sir, visiting hours have ended. Quite a while ago, in fact."

"I know, I know," He said, as he pulled a small card out of his jacket pocket. He held it out to the nurse by the small pin on the back. "I never got round to putting it on, I guess. Sorry about that." He turned to Nyx. "I'll go make that call while they run the tests, ok?"

Nyx sighed a little, before nodding.

Tristan closed the door behind him, then leaned against the door frame as he waited for Twilight to pick up.

Twilight sat in her room, sorting through her Pocket for whatever foci she could find. At either side were two piles of the objects she had tried. An extremely large notebook lay on her lap. She chewed her pencil absent-mindedly as she pulled out her wand from her time at Hogwarts.

"All right, next up," She said as she held the wand out in front of her, and took a deep breath before shouting "Lumos!" as loud as she dared.

A faint glow appeared at the tip of her wand. Twilight nodded, and placed the wand into the much smaller of the two piles. She wrote a few lines next to her wands entry. Just as she was about to begin looking through her Pocket again, she heard the faint sound of music from somewhere behind her.

Twilight thought for a few seconds before diving towards her bed, and swiping up her phone. "Tristan?"

"Yeah, it's me. You guys set off yet?"

"Not too long ago. What happened to you, though? Did you get stuck in traffic again?"

"Nah, nothing like that. Just didn't realise there were going to be so many forms I'd have to fill in, so by the time I got to Nyx's room I was wiped. She finally got me to wake up not too long ago." Tristan gave a short, nervous laugh, as Twilight sighed.

"So how is she?"

"Fine, but she misses you. I'd have let her talk to you, but the nurse came in to run her tests just as I was about to call. Figured it made more sense to do it like this. I'll call again after every match. And

don't worry. Yugi and Téa told me what happened in the shop. You'll do fine."

"And what if things don't go like they should?"

"Then you roll with the punches. I don't know what you've got in your bag of tricks, but I'd bet everything I have that yours is bigger and can deal with more stuff than mine. Just have faith in the Heart of the Cards, and you can't fail."

"Even against Yami?"

There was a slight chuckle before Tristan responded. "He's not actually the one you need to worry about, really..."

Twilight raised her eyebrow at that, but Tristan didn't complete the thought, and she decided it wasn't worth pushing. "All right, I'll keep that in mind. Just make sure Nyx stay's OK for me."

"I would have done that anyway, but you probably knew that already. I'll talk to you later, Josie."

"You too, Tristan." Twilight tossed the phone back onto her bed, before picking her notebook and pencil back up. Now, where was I?

Twilight had just finished clearing up her room when there was a knock at her door.

"Come in!" she called out just as she laid back on the bed.

Téa stepped into the room. "Yami and I were wondering what you were up to. You went to wait for Tristan calling you, and we haven't seen you since."

Twilight smiled sheepishly. "Sorry, I got caught up in some research." She opened her bedside table's drawer, and pulled out her notebook. "Tell Yami or Yugi I'm sorry they're not complete, but there were a couple of things that were just too big to bring out in this room."

Tea's eyes widened as she flipped through the notebook. "You did all of this overnight?"

Twilight debated whether to tell Téa how she had pulled it off, and decided that being vague was probably the best way to go. "Well, I found a few ways to use my magic, and a few other worlds as well. From there I just used some tricks I know to make it go a lot faster. Oh, and coffee. Coffee helped."

"Ok, well, we're five minutes away from the harbour, so if you want to grab your bags, we can meet Yugi and head for the opening ceremony."

"Sure, just give me a minute," Twilight said, dropping to the floor, and reaching under her bed. She pulled out her backpack and icebox. "Ready when you are."

Pegasus' harbour was so narrow, it made the flock of people leaving the ship appear worse than in Domino. However, it was thankfully still a relatively short walk from the harbour to Pegasus' Castle. There was a short wait before Pegasus appeared on his balcony, a glass of wine in his hand. He smiled, his eyes closed as he sipped at his drink, before he finally looked down to address the crowd.

"Congratulations to you all," He said as he raised his glass. "To have made it this far, you must be the world's greatest duellists. And so I welcome you to Duellist Kingdom." He completed his toast before continuing. "However, a Kingdom has only one throne. I look forward to the coming week, and so, assemble your decks carefully, with guile and creativity. You have all been given 2 Star Chips, at least one of which must be wagered on every one of your duels." Pegasus paused, both to scan the crowd, and to breathe. "Any person who can earn 10 or more will be given entry to my Castle, and the final stages of the tournament. Arenas have been placed throughout the island, which will become active in one hour. Feel free to prepare in any way you like, wherever you like. When the sky lights up with fireworks, you may begin."

He turned and exited down the same passageway he had come from. The crowd then erupted into various chattering. Twilight turned to face Yugi and Tea.

"Well, that sounded strange," she said, keeping her voice as low as she dared.

"It actually didn't sound all that different to what he usually says..." Yugi said, with Téa nodding in agreement. "But, notice something?"

Twilight raised an eyebrow, looking around. After a minute or two, she shook her head. "It's a group of people. I'm not sure what I'm looking for, here. A hint would be nice..."

"Try looking for what's not there..."

"Huh?..." She took another look, before realizing what was wrong. "Hey, where'd that Weevil kid go?"

"Don't worry. If he runs off, he always heads for the same place. Just follow us," Yugi said, before heading for one of the flights of stairs away from the Castle's grounds. "Be careful though. Some of these stairs are pretty old, so watch your footing."

Twilight and Téa followed close behind, descending down into one of the islands thick forests.

Weevil was waiting for the group by the Forest Grove's arena as Yugi, Twilight and Téa emerged into the clearing.

"He he he, I was wondering how long it would be before you noticed I had gone," he said, leering at the trio over his glasses. Just as he finished speaking, the fireworks started.

"Well, I guess there's no sense waiting any longer then. Weevil, I challenge you to a duel."

"Gladly, little Yugi. We'll duel for 2 Star Chips. After all, it wouldn't do to have you running around anymore once I've proven you're just a beginner who got lucky," Weevil said, as he climbed into one of the podiums of the arena.

All right, you want to take this one, or should I? Yugi asked Yami as he approached his podium.

I think I should. Blader was always one of my cards... came the response.

Got it. Good luck. Yugi took a deep breath as he stepped into place, and switched.

Yami placed his deck into its slot. Once it had been returned, he drew his hand, and looked over at Weevil. "Let's Duel."

Yami looked over his hand. *Well Yugi, we have two of the cards we need. Sangan, Pot of Greed and Monster Reborn are all helpful too. I guess it all comes down to how soon we can get the third card we need.*

Looks that way, but this is Weevil. Let's just hope he isn't cheating in some way we haven't thought of.

"I'll start," Yami announced, drawing another card from his deck. He saw the card he had added to his hand, and laughed briefly. "I'm sorry this was so short, Weevil." He then turned to Twilight. "Josie, you will soon see what it was my Grandpa was attempting in your duel."

"First, I play the magic card Pot of Greed to draw even more cards, before I place this face down. Then, I'll set this monster in defence mode, and end my turn."

"You seem to think you've already won, Yugi. In case you've forgotten, there are always at least two people in a duel." Weevil

drew his card. "I play this monster in face down defence mode. That ends my turn." Weevil smiled as he played the card.

Well, this seems familiar... Yugi thought. *Man Eater Bug?*

Man Eater Bug, Yami agreed. *This is exactly what we needed, don't you think?*

Yami drew another card, before looking over his hand. "I switch my Sangan to attack mode, and attack your face down monster."

Predictably, weevil began laughing maniacally. "Oh little Yugi, you already made your first mistake." He flipped his Man Eater Bug, and the holographic Sangan vanished into the Graveyard. "Say goodbye to your pathetic monster. That will do nicely for now."

"Are you done?" Yami asked, as he picked some dirt out from his nails and yawned. "Did you forget, my Sangan has a special ability? I can add one card to my hand, as long as it has less than 1500 attack points. I think my Exodia the forbidden one will do nicely, don't you?" Yami held up the card as he slid it into his hand. "Now, since it is still my turn, and it worked so well before, I'd like my Sangan back. So I activate my Monster Reborn to resurrect my Sangan, in defence mode, then end my turn."

The holographic Sangan returned to the field, as Weevil started to, impressively, become even paler."Th..Th...There's no way you'll be able to summon it in time." He drew a card, and began to laugh again. "I summon my Cross Sword Beetle in attack mode. And, thanks to the field bonus from the Forest, he gains a 10% boost to his attack and defence points."

A large beetle appeared across from Sangan, and after a few seconds, it began increasing in size.

"Now all I have to do is play a monster strong enough to take down any monsters you summon. You can't possibly stall long enough to summon Exodia now, Yugi. Go ahead and make your move."

Yami took a look at the card he drew, and began to smirk. "Whoever said I needed to stall?"

"What? You couldn't have drawn the last piece already!"

"You are right Weevil, I did not draw the last Exodia piece." Yami said, still smirking, while weevil breathed a sigh of relief "However, I did draw a card that will give it to me." He flipped around the Dark Hole he had drawn, and played it immediately. All the holograms disappeared from the field, and Yami's smirk grew broader. "You know what this means, right Weevil?"

Weevil had been struck silent in disbelief. All he could do was watch as Yami spread the five pieces of the all-powerful Exodia across his field.

The arena's holograms began to blur, and sparks began to fly from the edges, as slowly, the limbs of the great beast broke free from their chains, and reunited with their body. Exodia howled as he stood, towering even above the forest canopy.

Yami stared right at Weevil before giving his command. "Exodia, Obliterate!"

The towering monster brought its arms together, and the hum of magic could be heard, as a strange light formed between its hands. A few seconds later, a large shaft of light enveloped Weevil and his entire side of the field. As his podium started to lower, Yami looked across at Weevil one last time. "You lose."

The trio were silent as they left the forest, heading back towards the plains between the Harbour and Pegasus' Castle. Eventually, Twilight turned to Yugi.

"So, that was Solomon's only chance, as he put it? An instant win? I can't say that seems all that fair..."

"Well, you need to have all five pieces. Which are rarer than you're probably thinking – well, without a Pocket at least. And you'd be surprised how often we're only allowed one of each piece in a deck. Personally, I don't like to use Exodia that often anyway. If you start relying on it, then a loop tends to get a little..."

"Boring?" Twilight finished his sentence for him, then waited until he nodded before continuing. "Don't worry, I get it. I think most anchors feel like that at times. You just need to be careful about how you make it interesting again..."

Suddenly, someone came running through the crowd towards them. They pulled up a few feet away, and almost collapsed as they tried to catch their breath. After a few seconds they looked up at the trio. "You're Yugi Muto, right? Solomon Muto's Grandson?"

"Yeah, that's me," Yugi said, trying to place the newcomer. They seemed familiar somehow, but Yugi couldn't place them. "What do you want?"

"I'm Mike Valentine, and I'm looking for the girl who beat him." Mike said, looking down at Yugi "I'm assuming it's you," he added, turning to Twilight.

Yugi looked around, before lowering his voice. "How'd you know about that?"

"Actually, pretty simple. One of your friends here has a guest pass, the other has a duelling glove on, and I know of all the female duellists good enough to actually make it here. There'd been a rumour that Solomon had lost to a rookie like Kaiba, but I didn't want to believe it."

"Be careful," Twilight said, staring at Mike warily. "I beat him, I can beat you just as easily."

"Well, there is one way to test that theory..." Mike said, indicating a duelling arena that lay not far off. "What do you say to one Star Chip

apiece? I don't want to dash your hopes of making it big all at once, after all..."

Well, at least he ain't pullin' Mai's two-bit Psychic bull... Twilight heard someone say, but when she looked around, there wasn't anyone anywhere close enough to have said it. "Alright, one star Chip."

Mike and Twilight approached the podium, and sorted their decks. After drawing their hands, Twilight studied hers. *Well, my Magician Valkyria might come in handy in a turn or two, but everything else in here is useless right now. I need something good with my first draw, or I might end up like Solomon did before...*

"You can start!" she called across the arena.

"Nah, Ladies first. I insist," Mike replied.

"If you're sure..." Twilight said, drawing a card before he could respond. She looked down and smiled.

"I'll start by playing my Fortune Lady Earth, in attack mode." Twilight placed her monster on the field, and began looking over her hand again. "And then..." She started, but lost her train of thought after seeing the fully realised holographic version of her card. It looked just like...

"Applejack?..." Twilight whispered, as the rest of her cards slipped out of her fingers.

7.3 (CrossoverpairingLover)

Jack Atlas was a King.

A bored King, and that never boded well for anyone (particularly peasants).

The last half a dozen loops had been utterly boring. There were only so many times you could face the Dark Signers before you found them tiresome, even when they swapped up opponents.

What was the world coming to when you couldn't even get entertainment from squashing giant spiders, beaching death whales and pulverizing oversized geckos with your Red Dragon Archfiend/Red Nova Dragon/Etc.?

Sure, it was fun for the first few loops to use Red Nova Dragon and cause Roman Goodwin to freak out, but sadly that got old after a while.

Really, his last entertaining loop was the time he had encountered the Supreme King (Independent of Jaden) as a Dark Signer (who had replaced Kalin, who replaced Crow, who replaced Trudge, who replaced Martha, who replaced Armstrong...it was one of those loops).

Now *that* had been fun, a duel worth the battle of two kings. Sure, the clash between Red Nova Dragon and Dark Gaia had obliterated most of the Satellite, but it had still been the best duel Jack had had in a hundred loops.

But who knew when he'd have fun like that again? It wasn't like he could be taken into the Duel Monster Spirit World, become its King and enter diplomatic relations with the Earth, Barian World and Astral World like Jaden was known to do on occasion...

An idea sprang into Jack's head at that thought, a marvellous and brilliant idea.

"You want me to tell you what?!" Luna demanded of Jack as the former king of turbo duels (Jack had found that loops tended to end if he beat Yusei in the Fortune Cup...it was aggravating) gazed at her evenly.

"Your our token Duel Monster Whisperer. Tell me how I get one of those things"—Jack pointed at the ghost like image of Kuribon, said fur ball sweat dropped at being pointed out—"but something...fit for a king. Like Red Eyes Darkness Metal Dragon, or one of those really annoying new Dragons that are summoned with two banished cards that are generally Yuma's problem…"

"You can't choose what monsters have spirits in them or not, and you can't exactly order them off E-Bay or anything," Luna insisted. "They either come to you, or you have to go to them, which generally involves either a bunch of ruined temples in Yuma's time or..."

Jack had left at the first word about temples.

"…I hate to admit it, but I've been stuck in a rut the same as Jack. I need something new to do, hey Kuribon, think I could be the Black Rose Witch's apprentice?"

"Kreee."

"...Hey, if Yusei can train a non looping Leo to defeat a non looping Jack in a turbo duel, I think I can pull off being a semi-psychotic witch once or twice."

"Kreee."

After several loops investigating mysterious temples for cards (And having been run over by boulders, bitten by poisonous snakes and having to duel Darth Bane in a shadow game, which was decently entertaining) Jack found himself in a turbo duel against the robotic Jack Atlas that the Three Emperors liked to throw at him whenever they had the chance.

It got annoying after a while, particularly when the thing ruined his good name and stole his ramen.

It was really annoying when the Emperors decided to make it adaptable, because it tended to play far more...cheaply. In particular, the robot was a fan of trying to milk his deck dry with that Crush Card that Kaiba was a fan of.

"You are a washed up king, whose deck no longer has any monsters with more than 1500 attack points," the fake snarked from up ahead. "You've used up your Resonators earlier in the duel, and all I need do is activate Speed World 2 on my next turn. Face it, you're a fallen King, and I am your ghost!"

Why did Yliaster have to make a robot of him every single time? The world could make do with a few Robot Leo's...or a Robot Crow. Whatever was more annoying.

"I am the only king here, imposter, and I will never lose against some overly angsty cosplayer whose field is as empty as my own!" while Jack had lost against this robot the first time, he wasn't going to admit it and jinx it. The last thing they needed was to have a looping Aporia (Paradox was annoying enough) or Z-One "I Draw!"

Jack took a look at his only hope, and smirked.

"I had hoped to draw this little fella at one point, and now it's time to destroy you!" He held the card up dramatically. "Behold, the card I spent years investigating long lost ruins for, a spirit partner fit for the Master of Faster, the Sultan of Speed, the Turbo King Jack Atlas! Behold its terrifying might!"

Jack slapped down the blank card onto his runner's disk, which caused a burst of energy to shoot out of it, blinding both Jack's briefly as a tornado formed in the middle of the duel field.

"I Summon, the enforcer of the King, the all-powerful…"

The wind died down to reveal a little green haired girl with a staff (500/1500).

The two Jack's just stared at the summoned monster, before Fake Jack began laughing his robotic arse off.

"Oh, a Charmer monster, that is so terrifying! What more proof do I need that you're a fallen and failed king?"

Jack looked annoyed. Where was his terrifyingly badass destruction bringer? Instead, he got a little girl?

"Hey, I am not a little girl!" the charmer monster turned around and yelled at him. "I am ten years old...I think…" she had a ditzy and confused look about her that wouldn't look out of place on a non looping Leo. "Do I even have an age?"

"Great...my spirit partner is some sort of air head," Jack muttered to himself as his robotic foe continued to laugh, apparently not realizing he had only 400 life points.

Well, perhaps Jack would just shut him up.

"I attack you directly!"

The Robot was whacked in the face with the business end of the charmer's staff, ending the duel, and causing the robot to explode.

As Jack pulled over, having learned that he couldn't actually take the imposters additional Red Dragon Archfiends as his own, the charmer floated back over to him.

"We won, Mr. Jack, we won! What do we do now!?"

"…This is going to be a long loop," Jack muttered to himself as the air headed duel spirit pestered him.

Was this Karma for mocking Chazz about the Ojamas after beating him in that turbo duel the time Chazz, Jessie and Jaden were a Grand Prix team?

Thankfully the loop ended when Team Unicorn ended up paired against Team Ragnarok for round 1 of the Grand Prix and the chosen of the Norse ended up beaten by those pony lovers, so it was square one for Jack after that; he was once again Turbo King (if a false king), living in luxury in the highest of New Domino City's elite.

And hopefully, that annoying little charmer spirit was gone too...

"Hiya, Mr. Jack! Did we end up going back in time? Why is that? Are we in a video game? Are you going to invest in the stock market now that you know the future of Duel Runner technology…?"

Jack's eyes, formerly closed with sleep, shot open in horror as he saw the little green haired girl floating next to him, asking him a hundred different questions.

Was this what it was like to be Ranma with Ghost Nappa around all the time?

7.4 (More CrossoverpairingLover)

Seto Kaiba was annoyed.

That was, as Kaiba was occasion to admit, a general part of his personality. What didn't annoy him generally added up to his brother and his Blue Eyes White Dragons, so that left a lot of other things to annoy him.

This loop, of course, happened to be one of those things.

"I have no idea what happened, but I choose to blame Wheeler for this. I suppose I have to play my part." After all, even if Mokuba had not started looping yet, Kaiba put a lot of effort into not losing his connection to him, and in this loop, he would have to play his part to ensure he had a chance.

It was unfortunate about one of Jaden's friends, but hey, Cook wasn't a looper, so he would be fine. Plus, he was sort of possessed by numbers 19 and 61 right about now, so it was probably best to nip this in the bud.

"So, Mr. Cook, your soul is mine, PHOTON TRANSFORMATION!"

"I don't know who messed this up, but I am loving this loop!"

Joey Wheeler, the underdog of the first branch of the Duel loops, found himself the new head of Kaiba... *WheelerCorp,* a first for him, and a perfect way to annoy Kaiba in later loops.

After all, how hard was it to be a rich boy?

"Servants, bring me corn dogs. The best corn dogs money can buy!"

He'd buy out Zigfried later.

"I blame Crow for this."

"Hardly, this has Yuma written all over it."

Jack Atlas, dressed in a Slifer Red version of his general get up (And he was annoyed at being sorted into the dorm in the first place. He was a king, not some slacker!), with the spirit of Wynn the Wind Charmer floating next to him (equally annoying), found himself in a discussion with a similarly displaced version of Shark, who was somehow in his Barian form despite a lack of Barian energy around.

"I was hoping to get a chance to be heroic for a loop, but no, I'm supposed to replace a member of the Shadow Riders of all things," Shark muttered to himself. "I don't even want the Sacred Beast cards, they don't really do anything for my deck."

"Hey, I'm the only one of my guys here. It's pretty much me, Trey, Nistro, Dextra, Raphael, Leon and Rebecca Hawkins against the Barian Emperors or whatever else your calling yourselves this loop. I don't particularly know if I can trust those blokes to actually pull their weight—"

"But Mr. Jack, I heard that Raphael beat the Pharaoh in a fair duel once," Wynn spoke up.

Jack and Shark both looked impressed at that.

"Okay then, let me restate my previous comment; I don't know if the other 5 can pull their weight."

"You'll find out; Mizar's setting up a volcano ambush for tomorrow night, you might want to be ready for a hot awakening."

"Why are you called the Shadow Riders? Why don't you have a nose? Is that a mask or your face? Why are you purple? ..." Wynn began asking question after question as Nash looked annoyed.

"Really, Atlas? You just *had* to get a spirit partner?"

"Well, at least I have a nose."

"The name is Nightshroud, and I shall be taking your soul tonight, Signer!"

Bronk Stone, with the infamous Nightshroud mask on his face, declared this to a disturbed Chazz Princeton, who was dressed and marked like Crow Hogan.

"I blame Jaden for this," he deadpanned as he activated his duel disk.

" **Go forth my minions, spread forth the coming of the Great Leviathan!** "

In an eerily lit lair themed like some ancient tomb, a trio comprised of Fortuno, Amnael and Antimony walked away to spread the will of their master, the herald of the Orichalcos and the last being of Atlantis.

Said herald was shorter than normal, but had similar hair coloring. He was also a looper, despite the fact that Dartz was not.

"I don't know who messed up this time, but I'm going to need serious therapy after this one," Syrus, whose eyes were different colors (green and gold) muttered to himself. "Hey Thoth, can I request a Sanctuary Loop... **TO ALLOW FOR THE SPREAD OF THE ORICHALCOS TO ALL** ...with quality therapy services"

Being a pony for a loop wouldn't be all that bad. If it got the Orichalcos out of his head

---

"So, what your saying is that we are somehow trapped in a time loop, having to repeat a specific period of our lives again and again until some giant god computer is fixed!?"

"...Gah...Yes, now please stop choking me"

Crow was absently tossed to the ground by a rather scary looking silver haired female of rather impressive beauty, who was apparently a new looper in a previously un-contacted branch.

"Know your place"

"What's that supposed to mean!?" Crow demanded, annoyed he got stuck in this world in the first place.

It was supposed to be people like Naruto or Harry who made first contact; they were better at not being choked by Vampires in

questionably short skirts.

This was so Jack's fault.

"What the hell is going on! Why do we keep repeating the same day again and again! Tell me!"

Akiza gulped as she had a blue sword that was on fire held against her neck by a dark haired teenager with demonic looking fangs, tail and ears, who was also on fire (Which was blue, oddly enough). Another teenager who looked about the same age with glasses had guns pointed at her.

It was rather overkillish.

"Are you an agent of Satan? What is his plan, Witch!"

There were two types of new loopers; the confused, and the confused and angry. It was just her luck she ended up with the latter.

Akiza had no idea why she was in a fused loop, but that meant that someone had been an idiot.

That meant it was either Yuma, Jaden or Crow.

She was going to sick Black Rose Dragon on whoever the idiot was.

"This is all your fault, Jaden." Yusei glared at the brown haired Spirit Whisperer, who threw his hands up in defence.

"Hey, how was I supposed to know using Super Polymerization to fuse my copy of Dark Magician, Stardust Dragon and Utopia I got when I replaced you guys a couple times along with my Neos would FUBAR everything?"

"I am just surprised that Yuma didn't think of something that dumb," Astral deadpanned. "After all, I do believe he does have a copy of

Super Polymerization from that loop with Principal Armstrong of Duel Academy and Girag and Ponta replacing Banner and Pharaoh.

"HEY!"

The four main anchors, with the spirit forms of the Pharaoh and Astral alongside them, had no idea where they were. It seemed to be some medieval esc town, if the lack of cars and electricity was any indication.

That of course meant a lack of indoor plumbing, which was a concern for later.

"Okay, let's try to think about this logically." Yugi tried to keep some form of peace. "Let's try and figure out if this world is just a new part of a world we're familiar with. For all we know, we're in some new part of Alegesia or wherever that Gelel stone comes from in Naruto's world. We have no reason to panic and think we're in a new world or something"

"Well, wherever we are"—Yuma pointed towards the edge of that city, where a gigantic wall stood somewhat obscenely high—"they are paranoid about something...hey, it looks like Girag's here!" Yuma pointed towards the wall, where a gigantic red hand had reached over the top of it and was now pressing down on it.

"That's not C106, Yuma," Yugi said in terror as he realized what world this was. He had heard about it from Link, but he thought the guy was exaggerating its horror.

How wrong he was.

"Huh?"

"Because C106 doesn't have a face like that" Jaden said in horror, as the four heroes of their respective eras found themselves staring at a being to be later referred to as a Colossal Titan.

Syrus would not be alone in therapy next pony loop.

7.5 (CrossoverpairingLover again)

Akiza's Number 39

"Witch!"

"Freak!"

"Go away!"

Akiza had an annoyed look as the ever present 'let's harass the duelist capable of creating a real black hole with a card' idiots continued to harass her in the Fortune Cup Stadium, where she found herself opposing Hunter Pace in a turbo duel (She had gotten her turbo duel license earlier this loop, though she had to wonder why she needed a license when she was pretty sure Yusei didn't have one at this point in the baseline).

Honestly, the people of New Domino were nearly as bad as her loops with the X-Men. These fools seemed to be cut from the same cloth, they simply didn't have a sentient bacteria nagging them to stay that way.

Or at least she was pretty sure Sublime was the cause of it. Those super hero loops seemed to have different storylines whenever she went there.

Though 'Sayer Magneto leading' thoughts aside, back to the Turbo Duel.

Now, with the loops, Akiza had improved on her turbo-duelling quite a lot, considering she managed to beat Andore and tied Breo the last time she and Yusei had started a loop late, around the time Jack got curb stomped by Andre a la baseline (Who, it should be admitted, was a good enough duelist that in the cases where Andre was time

displaced, he was able to defeat a non looping Kaiba and Kite, as well as Zane, Team Ragnarok's Dragan and Brave.)

But Hunter Pace was a different sort of turbo duelist. For one thing, he was pretty unique and tricky with his 'acceleration deck' that not enough people gave him credit for.

Second, while Jack got to beat him up a lot, Yusei rarely got a chance to do so and, being further down the chain than they were, this was her first time doing so.

The third and final reason...He did not use Synchro Monsters. That meant he could pack all sorts of anti Synchro cards like he was the long lost Texan Ylliaster Emperor.

"You're good, little witch, but I came here to beat Jack Atlas, and your just a warm up run!" The Hunter gloated as the named duelist and his spirit partner, Wynn, rolled their eyes at him from the central tower. "My trap makes it so you can't play any tuner monsters, so your Black Rose Dragon is useless! Your Rose Tentacles and Phoenixian Cluster were a nice try, but they just couldn't burn me, or my Supersonic Skull Flame (2600, 2000). You Synchro Users just don't pack many ways to fight off an ace card without a synchro summon. It's your Achilles heel. Once you stop the tuner monsters, your kind is just doomed. Doomed Doom doomey doom doom!"

Akiza in the baseline would probably just burn damage him until her psychic powers broke his back just for that last series of annoying dooms, but Akiza had other ways to deal with him now.

"My turn, draw!" Akiza smirked as she saw just what she needed.

It was true she could no longer use tuner monsters, but she had an ace up her sleeve, an ace that was only just being developed now in baseline.

"First thing's first, I normal Summon my Revival Rose in attack mode!" the three flowered rose burst through a blue portal and

appeared on the field (1300, 1300). "Next, I activate the Speed Spell, Summon Speeder, to special summon Blue Rose Dragon in attack mode!" the blue and mini Black Rose Dragon roared and appeared next to Akiza (1600, 1200).

"...You know, it would be better for stalling if you had them in Defence mode, right"? Hunter snarked.

Akiza continued as if he had not spoken.

"Now, I overlay my level 4 Revival Rose with my Blue Rose Dragon!"

"Over what!?"

The two monsters turned into purple energy, which spun into the air and flew into a galaxy like vortex.

"With these two monsters, I build the overlay network, and XYZ summon, Number 39, Black Rose Paladin!"

From the vortex descended a furled black rose, which began to unfurl and reveal a dark armored knight with a Black Rose Mask like coloring on its helmet, with a suspiciously familiar yellow mark on said mask. The Sword the warrior held seemed to hum with magical might. The warrior roared and spun its weapon before pointing it at Hunter as two spheres orbited around the monster (2500, 2000).

As the crowd broke into shocked and confused whispers, Hunter narrowed his eyes at the monster that Akiza had summoned in a manner he had never seen before, but kept his cool for the most part.

"I have no idea what you just did, but it don't matter. My Skull still is more powerful!"

"That is until I activate my Paladin's special ability. By removing one overlay unit, I can decrease the attack points of your monster by 100 for every plant type monster in my graveyard." An overlay unit flew

into the monster's sword, which glowed and shot a blast of energy into Skull Flame (1800, 2000).

"Clever, and I still don't know what sort of monster you summoned, but My Speed Booster Trap card—"

"I activate my face down Trap Stun, and attack your Supersonic Skull Flame! Black Rose Slash!"

The Paladin flew towards the centaur zombie, who roared and charged at the swordsman itself, leading only to its destruction as the Paladin sliced it in half, engulfing Hunter in an explosion.

"CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS!?" Hunter cried out as he always did when he was defeated as his life points went to zero and his duel runner decelerated, getting Akiza past the first round.

"That witch somehow used a card type that doesn't exist"…

"She must have stolen a prototype of some kind…"

"Hey, it's unfair to use cards everyone else cannot use, ya know!"

"Cheating Witch!"

As her own duel runner slowed to a stop, she shook her head.

Some things never seemed to change, even without Sublime (hopefully) influencing things.

7.6 (CrossoverpairingLover made a lot of these)

The reason YUGI is the King of Games

"I have no idea what's up with this loop, but it's cool!"

"Jaden, shut up," Yusei grunted.

Yugi (or technically Atem at the moment) looked rather annoyed, as his fellow duel monster anchors—Jaden, Yusei, Astral and Yuma—were floating around him like a bunch of Astrals. For some reason, they had gotten stuck in the puzzle, which was now also Yuma's Key, a symbol of the Crimson Dragon and the key to unlocking the Sacred Beasts (And who knows what else).

Even more annoying was the fact he was being confronted by the Supreme King, Z-One (In Yusei form) and Dark Zexal.

"Why are we fighting ourselves? I mean, this isn't one of those loops where we survive a reset and run into our younger selves, not that I ever had one of those," Yuma had to ask as Astral observed Dark ZeXal uneasily.

"Because I don't particularly want to have to deal with your untrained self."

"What do you think I am, Astral, a Pokemon or something!"

"Not a bad analogy at times."

Yugi ignored the two as he activated his duel disk against his three opponents in a duel for (probably) reality.

"I draw!" Yugi declared, noting his hand held Ganbara Knight, Gagaga Magician, Black Luster Soldier, a card he had obtained during a Number loop and Necro Gardna. "And I activate Card Destruction, sending all of our hands to the graveyard and forcing us all to draw five new cards!"

As the cards were discarded and Yugi drew his new ones, he couldn't help but smirk. He had drawn Monster Reborn, Debris Dragon, Kagetokage, Watapon and Spell Striker.

"I'll start by activating my Watapon's effect, for as I drew this card by a magic effect, I can special summon it." The fluff ball popped onto the field (200, 300). "Next, I activate Monster Reborn, reviving the

Gagaga Magician I sent to the graveyard." the chain loving magician rose from a purple vortex to the field (1500, 1000). "With that, I activate the effect of the Grave Ritual Spell card I sent to the graveyard this turn; with it I can ritual summon a monster from my graveyard with monsters from my field. And, as I can change Gagaga Magician's level from 4 to 8, I can use Gagaga Magician as Ritual Material and ritual summon Black Luster Soldier!"

As the stars on Gagaga Magicians belt lit up, the magician glowed purple and shot back into the grave vortex, as a burst of light rose from it and brought forth a powerful looking knight (3000, 2500).

"Next, I normal summon Debris Dragon from my hand"—the dragon tuner monster roared to life onto the field (1000, 2000)—"and with its effect, special summon a monster from my graveyard. I choose Ganbara Knight!" the shield warrior burst through a glowing blue circle to the field (0, 1800). "and, as I normal summoned a level 4 monster, I can special summon Kagetokage!" The shadow lizard rose up from the ground (1100, 1500).

"Now, I overlay level 4 Ganbara Knight and Kagetokage!" the light warrior and dark lizard shot into the air, transforming into spiralling energy. "I XYZ summon Number 39: Utopia"!

With a burst of light, the sealed form of Utopia descended from the sky and unfurled its blade (2500, 2000).

"I banish my Monster Reborn from my grave to special summon Spell Striker from my hand!" the little warrior spun from the graveyard and yelled (600, 200). "Now, I tune Watapon and Spell Striker with Debris Dragon!" the dragon burst into four green rings that surrounded Spell Striker and Watapon.

"I synchro Summon Stardust Dragon!" The white dragon roared as it appeared alongside Utopia and Black Luster Soldier in attack mode (2500, 2000).

At the sight of that move, Yuma and Jaden clapped in appreciation.

"I see how he is always able to beat me," Yusei noted to himself as the three evil versions of themselves found themselves up against a wall comprising effect destruction and battle destruction supported by a beatstick.

7.7 (burningclaw2, continuation of 6.6)

-YuJo A Bond Which No Evil Can Topple-

After Jonathan had gotten the Chinese man who sold Dio the poison used on his father, he and Yugi went to the Joestar Mansion for the confrontation with Dio.

Jonathan was once more hoping to stop Dio before he put on the Stone Mask, and if that failed, he would put the monster Dio would become down in the Joestar Mansion before he could cause any unnecessary deaths.

Dio was in the middle of his 'I want to Atone' act after being caught, when all of a sudden a confident voice spoke up from behind him.

"Hmph. You? Atone? Please do not make me laugh," said the confident Atem from behind Dio.

"What!?" exclaimed Dio, turning to face the young man, who radiated an aura of confidence and charisma. "Who are you!?" He yelled at the sight of Atem, sweat starting to appear on his face.

"You may call me Atem," the confident young man replied, "and I have seen many of the vilest of men in my days but you take the cake, Dio Brando. Your very presence reeks of evil, so much that anybody who feels the bare minimum of your presence would feel nothing but revulsion. That is something only someone born completely evil can possess."

As Atem said this, he brought out Wan Chen, the Chinese poison seller/fortune teller.

You have to admit, thought Jonathan as he watched this, *Atem could give Speedwagon a run for his money on the speech here.*

"This man is the witness to your buying of the poison," Atem finished. This had cued the police and Jonathan's father to reveal themselves. Dio had broken down sweating as he gritted his teeth at the site.

"Dio, I've heard it all!" said George Joestar. "I am so sorry…your father saved my life…and I've tried to raise you with as much love and hope as my own son!"

As he said all this, he started to head towards the stairs and continued talking, "I will go to my room and rest…I don't want to see my son be taken in…"

"So, now that you've got me surrounded, it's all over…" said Dio.

"That man…he won't be caught…" said Wan Chen, "That's what my fortune-telling tells me…it's written not just in the three birthmarks behind his ear, but in his face! He was born with great luck!" This statement had cause George to get a worried look on his face.

"JoJo…I'll let myself be arrested… but at least put the handcuffs on me yourself…for the sake of the seven years we've been together…" said Dio, his arms in position to be cuffed even with the sling on. "I've hurt my shoulder… if I can ask anything of you, don't be too rough."

Jonathan knew about the trick that Dio was planning and prepared himself for what was to come as he said, "Okay, I'll put on the handcuffs."

As Jonathan approached Dio with the handcuffs, a glint lit up from within Dio's sling.

As Jonathan got close, Dio began speaking, "JoJo…there's a limit to human ability…"

At this Jonathan pretended to look wondered as Dio continued speaking, "I've learned one thing in my short life… the harder you plan, the less things will go according to your plans! As long as you cannot go beyond humanity…"

At this Jonathan adopted a shocked and angered look as he prepared for what was about to happen as he thought, *Hopefully I can stop Father from being killed this time.*

At Jonathan's look, Dio withdrew the Stone Mask and the knife from the sling as he exclaimed, "I reject my humanity! JoJo! I'll transcend humanity!"

Dio moved to put on the mask and stab Jonathan while everyone was shocked at the sight of the knife, however he was stopped when a giant stone sword struck the ground in front of him. This had ended up saving the life of George Joestar, as he had moved to take the knife to his back so that it wouldn't hit Jonathan, who was in motion to move his father out of the way of the knife and dodge the blow himself.

The existence of the stone sword caught everyone by surprise. When they looked to see what had brought the weapon down, they were shocked to see an ivory stone knight on a horse, looking similar to a knight piece in chess. The knight brought the sword up at the ready once more, but made no other moves.

"Dio," Atem's voice called, making everyone turn to look at him. What they saw was surprising. On the young man's forehead was a golden image of the Eye of Horus. Behind him, his shadow stood elongated to the point it appeared to be looming over them all, and it also had the same symbol on its forehead. "For your attempt on my friends' life, you must now play a game with me."

Wh-what is this? Jonathan thought, shocked. After all, hearing and seeing are two different things. *Atem acts as if he were a predator and Dio is his prey.*

"A game!?" Dio exclaimed, shocked and enraged that his plan had been foiled.

"Yes, but not just any game. We'll be playing a 'Game of Darkness', where the stakes are much higher," replied Atem. "Should you win, you will go free to do as you wish. But should I win, you must play a Penalty Game." A dark chuckle escaped from Atem's mouth.

"Oh. And what will we be playing?" Dio enquired.

"We'll play a game of chess, but we'll be playing as the kings giving their soldiers commands." As Atem said this, the world itself seemed to be shifting. The floor was becoming checkered like a chess board and large ivory and ebony statues had begun to rise from the floor. The Joestar's, police, and Wan Chen all were standing on a platform away from the giant chess board. The only pieces missing were the White and Black King's which were replaced by Atem and Dio respectively.

"I'm sure you know the rules, Dio!" exclaimed Atem.

"Of course!" Dio yelled back. "Make your move!"

"Very well, then, Game Start!" announced Atem as the game went underway, the Kings pawn moving two spaces forward. The spectators could only watch anxiously as the game unfolded.

Dio had replied to Atem's pawn with his own King's Pawn. Atem answered this with his White Bishop as it marched to C4, two spaces to the left of his King's Pawn, while Dio had his Black Bishop move in front of Atem's. Atem's move was sending his White Bishop Pawn one space forward while Dio moved his Queen to guard him. Atem had then moved his King side Knight into ready position for taking Dio's King's Pawn, which was met with the Queen's Pawn advancing one square. Atem then sent forth his own Queen's Pawn. However it moved two spaces instead of one, thus causing Dio to move his Black Bishop back in order to protect it. Atem then castled himself with the King's Rook as Dio moved his King's Knight forward.

Amazing, thought Jonathan, watching as Atem's and Dio's pieces moved about, each one probing for an opening to exploit. *Dio appears to be getting nervous, while Atem remains perfectly calm!*

Atem then moved his Queen forward to watch his pawns, while Dio had Castled himself with his own Kings Rook. This was answered as Atem's own Black Bishop moved into striking position of Dio's Knight. Dio had answered this move by sending forward the King side Rook's Pawn in hopes of forcing the Bishop to be called back. While Atem did call his Black Bishop back it was still poised to strike Dio's Knight, Dio had then moved forward the Pawn that was guarding him when he had castled so he could attempt to take Atem's Black Bishop. Once more Atem withdrew his Black Bishop, at this time Dio moved his original King's Pawn to take Atem's Queen's Pawn.

Everyone was shocked as the Black King's Pawn, which looked like a lightly armored human, took out a club and smashed it upon the White Queen's Pawn. The opposing Pawn shattered pieces of it scattering about the board. However that wasn't what shocked everyone, it was the fact that once all the pieces of the destroyed Pawn stopped moving hundreds of monstrous hands appeared from under the board and starting dragging the shattered Pawn underneath.

"Wh-what was that!?" yelled Dio, eyes wide at what he had just witnessed.

Atem only chuckled darkly as he replied. "It is the fate of the loser of our game, Dio. The monsters hidden below this board will feast on every destroyed piece and eventually they will enjoy the flesh of the losing King. Now then, it's my turn."

Atem then moved his original King's Pawn forward another space as it was no longer blocked. In return Dio moved his King's Knight back in order to protect it from Atem's Pawn. It was then that Atem moved his Queen within striking range of Dio, the White Queen seemingly glaring down at Dio as he was placed in check. In order to get out of check Dio planted himself behind his retreated Knight. Atem's Queen

was then moved in front of Dio's Knight but not before she backhanded the Pawn that was in her way into shards. Dio then moved his White Bishop in front of his own Queen. However Atem chose to move the King's Pawn to take down Dio's Queen's Pawn, once more monstruous hands appeared to claim their prize. Dio answered this move by using a previously unmoved White Bishop's Pawn to eliminate the recently moved Kings Pawn. Atem countered by moving his Black Bishop to strike the Pawn.

"Checkmate Dio," called Atem knocking everyone out of the reverie of watching the match. Dio could do nothing as if he moves to save his Queen, then Atem's Knight would start to advance in order to further trap Dio, as Atem's Queen glared down at him from behind his own Knight.

"Damn you!" cursed Dio, tightening his grip on the knife he still held, before he charged at the confident victor, blade poised to strike. "I don't care about this game anymore, I'll just use your life to transcend instead of JoJo's like I planned!"

"You lose, Dio," Atem stated calmly while everyone was yelling at him to move, "You not only planned to kill the man who took you in but you tried to crush Jonathan's spirit and even attempted to kill him. There is no salvation for you, Dio Brando!"

As Dio continued his desperate charge, Atem pointed one hand at him and yelled, "Penalty Game: Experience of Death!"

Suddenly, the ground below Dio disappeared; looking down, he saw a variety of hungering beasts waiting for him to fall so they could feast on his flesh. With his free hand, Dio managed to grab a ledge only to be forced to let go as Atem had walked up and stamped on his fingers with enough force to break the bones. This had led to Dio falling into the pit of monsters as they eagerly moved in to devour him.

Dio's screams of terror and agony seemed to have caused everything surrounding them to shatter like glass, revealing the

entrance room of the Joestar Mansion just as it was before the Game of Darkness began. Dio was huddled on the floor, tears flowing from his eyes, the Stone Mask and knife discarded to the side. He was mumbling incoherently from his position, but one could hear the absolute terror he felt.

The policemen quickly shook their heads, dismissing what they had witnessed as a mind game, before grabbing the terrified Dio and dragging him away.

Jonathan picked up the Stone Mask before looking at Atem and asked, "What did you do? Will he recover?" Inside, he felt like cheering. *Father survived this Loop! Maybe now I can introduce Erina to him when we reunite. But what happened to Dio?*

At this, Atem gave a small smile as he shook his own head in friendly exasperation, "You're a good man, JoJo, caring for a person who would have gladly taken your life and those of everyone that was here. As for what I've done, I simply placed Dio under the Penalty Game, The Experience of Death which makes it seem like one is being repeatedly slaughtered by monsters. Dio will recover…if there is any good in his heart, but I personally doubt it."

Atem's reply both shocked Jonathan and made him blush slightly at the praise this charismatic and confident man just gave him. A man who had earlier on become a new friend for Jonathan.

George Joestar walked towards Atem and gave him a hug while crying slightly before pulling away and saying, "Thank you, Thank you. You helped save not just my life but JoJo's as well. How may I ever repay you?"

"You do not need to repay me," Atem replied, smiling warmly at the older man. "I was only helping someone I view as a friend. But if you feel as if you must repay me, then a place to stay would be appreciated. I am currently lacking in lodgings."

"Agreed. The servants will collect your things," said George, smiling at Atem's reply, though he felt that just a place to stay wouldn't be enough to pay off the debt accrued this day. "JoJo, why don't you show your friend to his room."

This shocked both Atem and Jonathan. Though Jonathan was somewhat expecting this to happen.

Nodding his head, Jonathan led Atem to a room upstairs for him to stay at.

he thought, *both Yugi and Atem are good friends like he was.*

Looking outside at the sky, Jonathan couldn't help but smile at what happened today.

7.8 (CrossoverpairingLover swinging back in)

Duels on Webbing

Jack Atlas felt bored at the wheel, a concerning sentence indeed.

Dueling, unlike many arts, did not bore that easily in the loops. This was in part due to the nature of shuffling; every duel came out differently.

Just because you fought the same guy didn't mean you used the same cards each time. Yusei had, for example, once defeated Balder in a duel with a combo of Road Warrior, Second Booster and Speed Warrior after all.

However, having to duel the same people too often could increase the onset of boredom, something that Jack Atlas was not fond of...

"How do you steer this thing anyway? I mean, you have a huge wheel in your face."

Speaking of things he wasn't fond of, Wynn was still his problem.

Jack opened his mouth, debating how to yell at Wynn about how kings did not need to see the road before him, when the oddest sound filled the Kaiba Dome...

"And here he is, the duel champion from New York City. He's amazing, he's spectacular, he turbo duels with only his webbing; he's Spiderman!"

Jack and Wynn blinked in unison as the famous Spiderman web swung his way to the starting zone with a duel disk on his arm as the crowd cheered loudly.

"...'Sup?" the web head waved.

"What do you think you're doing!? You can't turbo duel with web slinging!"

"Says you."

Okay, boredom was going to the curb; he had the honor of Turbo dueling to avenge. If not, how long until someone challenged him on an Ostrich?

(Leonite)

Jack's eyebrow twitched. It was a month later and the webhead had challenged him to a rematch. He wasn't using the webs anymore which was good. But on the other hand…

"All right, I'll bite. Just where did you get an ostrich and how did you know?"

Spider-Man, his face hidden behind the mask still, seemed to grin. "I can't reveal all my secrets now can I?"

Chapter 8

So... some of you might be wondering why, after Loop 7, THIS took so long. To be blunt... Imaginatrix, the beta for this fic, has gotten busy, and over the last month on SB no replacement Beta-er has popped up. And I've had this one waiting to be uploaded for a few months. So, for now, we're going with a new system. I'll post a spellchecked chapter, and if you guys spot errors, let me know and I'll correct them ASAP.

As for future loops, I will be compiling loopset 9 tomorrow to hopefully upload within the week. Loopset 10, however, is planned to be special.

Because honestly... you didn't think I'd leave out Arc-V, would you? Loopset 10 is Arc-V exclusive.

8.1 (Bardic_Knowledge, Fused Loop with Magic the Gathering.)

Jace was quite confused to find himself in a place other than the Guildpact Office on Ravnica. It appeared to be a classroom of some form. Fortunately, he was surrounded by enough people to get the gist of where he was from their minds.

Hmm, standard teenager minds, except- Jace schooled his mind as it encountered two immensely old minds. One was pretty open, but it was enmeshed with a dark and well-protected mind that felt dangerous.

He kept himself focused on the class, if only because of the unfamiliar memories that he found in his own head, though he was anxious about the minds he felt. They were older than Niv-Mizzet. He didn't know for sure, but they could have even been older than

Nicol Bolas. Trying to read all the maze runners almost broke his mind, who knew what trying to read a mind that old could do?

After class let out, he let himself go through the motions of the memories in his head until he was approached by a boy with three-colour hair in some of the more outrageous spikes he'd ever seen.

"Hello. I've haven't seen you here before. I'm Yugi, and welcome to the Yu-gi-Oh! Loops, where are you from?"

Jace licked his lips. He wasn't used to being so far out of his depths and he definitely didn't like it. "I'm Jace Beleren. I thought you knew, since we're in the same class..."

Yugi frowned. "Well, sometimes the Loops give you a different name when they fuse. And this is the first time I've met you, so..."

"I don't know what's going on and that's not normal for me, so I'm really out of my depths right now."

Yugi's eyes widened. "Oh. You're a new Looper and this is your first Loop? Follow me, I'll take you to my grandfather's shop and I'll give you the 'Welcome to the Multiverse' speech."

'Multiverse? You're a Planeswalker?"

"No, I'm a Looper. Just, let me explain what's going on, and then you can tell me about your home Loop, okay?" Jace nodded and followed the kid out of the classroom.

"So that's what's going on," Yugi finished, before putting his presentation tools away.

Jace nodded. He was feeling much more comfortable now that the situation was explained. He still hadn't tried to read the mind of Yugi because of that dark presence or the age, but he was beginning to get a feel for this "Loop" thanks to the memories of everyone else

they'd passed. In fact, he found himself comparing the decks various duellists carried to the one his memories told him he carried.

"Fascinating," he murmured, then he pulled "his" cards out of his pocket. "Do you mind if I...?"

"You already have a deck? That's actually kind of rare for guest Loopers."

"Comparing my two sets of memories, the cards seem to correlate with the spells I can cast back home."

"Okay, then let's give it a try. If you don't mind, I'll just use my baseline deck."

"Since you're the newcomer, I'll allow you first turn," said Yugi.

"Thank you," said Jace. He had to do his best to resist reading his opponent's mind. It was very tempting, but that dark presence... He glanced over the hand he had drawn. "I'll open with three face down cards and summoning my Krovikan Mist.

Yugi frowned. "I've never heard of a card like that, what's it do?"

"Krovikan Mist gets stronger for each Monster with the same type on the field. Since it counts itself, it's currently at 500 ATK and DEF. That will end my turn."

"Interesting. I'll set a monster and another card and end my turn."

Jace raised an eyebrow. "You're playing very defensively. I'll set a monster myself and end my turn."

"Most Loopers tend towards a more aggressive play style. I'll summon my Summoned Skull and-"

"Activate my trap." Jace flipped over one of his face-down cards. "Summoner's Bane destroys your monster and puts an Illusion token

on my side of the field. Because the Illusion is an Aqua-Type, Krovikan Mist becomes more powerful."

"Well played. I'll activate the Swords of Revealing Light and end my turn."

"Your Swords reveals my face-down monster as a Fathom Seer, which lets me draw two cards when it's flipped. The Seer is also an Aqua-Type, which gives my Krovikan Mist 1500 ATK and DEF. Now, on my turn I'll play the Field Spell Future Sight. It forces me to play with the top card of my deck revealed, but I'm able to play that card as if it were in my hand." Jace smiled at the revealed card.

"I'll play my Aeon Chronicler as a Spell. This puts a counter on it for each card in my hand; every turn after this, I draw an extra card until each counter is gone, which is when the Chronicler is summoned. After that, I'll summon a second Krovikan Mist, which gives them both 2000 ATK." Now on top of the deck was a monster card named "Archaeomancer." "I'll end my turn."

Yugi looked at the card he drew and nodded. "I'll summon Sangan, and then activate Dark Hole, which destroys all creatures on the field."

"Then I'll activate another of my face-down cards. Counterspell. Negates your Dark Hole and gets rid of it."

"I think I'm getting the idea of your deck: Aqua monsters and negation techniques. It's actually kind of annoying. Regardless, that's the end of my turn."

"I'll draw my two cards, then set a monster. Then I'll set the top card of my deck." Yugi made note of the now face-down Counterspell. "Then I'll activate my face-down Into the Roil, which returns your Swords of Revealing Land to your hand. And now that I can do it, I'll have my Krovikan Mists attack each of your face down monsters."

"Not so fast! I have Traps of my own, after all. And I activate Mirror Force, which destroys all attack position monsters you control." Jace winced. If only he had drawn a Memory Lapse or Remand. Instead he was left with his face-down Archaeomancer and his face-up Fathom Seer.

"Very well, I'll end my turn."

"I'll play Swords of Revealing Light again."

"Counterspell."

"Just what I was hoping for. That allows me to play Mystic Box without worry, destroying your face-down card and giving you control of my Sangan." Jace looked puzzled for a second. "Then I summon Dark Magician and attack Sangan!"

"I'll activate Repulse, returning Dark Magician to your hand. It then lets me draw a card."

"I'll end my turn."

Jace drew. "I'll play Ancestral Visions. In two turns I get to draw three cards. Then I'll switch Sangan to defense position and set another monster."

"I'll draw a card and end my turn."

8.2 (CrossoverpairingLover has big loops, but this one takes the cake, and probably ate it too)

CARD GAMES ON TIE FIGHTERS

"Here he is, the top turbo duelist of Lucas City! He's the armored samurai, the man of twilight, his breath the embodiment of terror for his opponents. Ladies and Gentleman, I give you, Darth Vader!"

Jack Atlas, and his annoying duel spirit Wynn, both just stared in shock as the Tie Fighter, seemingly converted into a duel runner, wheeled over to the starting line, with Darth Vader at the wheel.

"Well, at least you're using wheels." Jack grouched. Obviously the recent encounter with Spiderman was still annoying the master of faster.

"I still think the idea of playing card games on motorized vehicles is foolish, but I suppose it's either this or learn Gungan Poetry" Vader mused in annoyance as both engines revved "Say...why do I sense a second presence around you?"

"Wait, you can see her!?" Jack was surprised. Not many out of world loopers who didn't spend at least a few loops here (or replace Jaden) could see duel spirits. And this, to Jack's knowledge, was only the second time Anakin/Vader had looped into their branch of the loops.

He had apparently replaced Yuma at one point, but he hadn't heard anything else about that loop.

"See, no. The Force, though, is in all lifeforms. I can all but see her"

"Speed World is now in effect! Turbo Duelists, Acceleration!"

The two vehicles sped off as the starting sound, with Wynn suddenly gaining a pair of goggles that wouldn't look that out of place on a baseline Anakin during his Pod Race.

"I'll start!" Jack drew Wynn the Wind Charmer "And Summon Wynn the Wind Charmer in defense mode!"

Wynn, who had been holding on inside the Wheel of Fortune/Phoenix Whirlwind, suddenly fell out and onto the field, where she turned blue (500, 1500).

"Wait, why did I just turn blue?"

"I'll play 3 cards face down and give it over to you, Darth"

"...I didn't choose to loop into your world in this suit" Vader complained "Draw!"

"As you control a monster and I do not" (Hey, I am not a monster you robot) "I can special summon B2 Battle Droid from my hand in attack mode" a B2 battle droid rose up from a blue circle onto the turbo field (1200, 900). "Whenever I successfully summon a B2 Battle Droid, I can special summon all other B2 Battle droids in my Hand or deck" two more appeared alongside the first.

"Now, I overlay my 3 level 5 B2 Battle droids" the droids turned into brown energy and flew into a starry vortex, "to XYZ summon, Number 53: Sith-hitS" a black, robed fiendish figure descended from the vortex (100, 0).

"...Great, numbers" Jack muttered. Considering that Anakin had replaced Yuma, what else did he have but Numbers (And maybe Baby Triagon).

It was a while since Jack had been Yuma, so his memories of the various Numbers were a little faded, but for some reason Number 53 was...particularly ominous for him.

"I now activate the effect of Number 53" a overlay unit flew into the robed figure's cloaks, as it glowed and fired sith lightning at Wynn.

The lightning struck Wynn, shocking her as she was forced into attack mode as the lightning surrounded her in a seeming cage.

"Huh, I'm not blue anymore?"

"The effect of Number 53 changes an opponent's monster's battle position, and makes it impervious to death. However, in exchange for this, you cannot tribute or use the targeted monster for any summoning method as long as the targeted card remains face up"

"What kind of messed up effect is that!?" Jack demanded.

"The effect of an immortality seeker" Vader noted "But, in case you didn't notice, I had yet to normal summon, and I normal summon Clone Trooper in attack mode" the white suited trooper mustered onto Vader's side of the field (1400, 300).

"When I normal summon Clone Trooper, I activate its effect, allowing me to special summon a second clone trooper from my hand or deck" a second clone trooper appeared.

"Are you done yet? I haven't had such a long turn since I last duelled Crow" damn Blackwing swarming.

"I overlay my level 4 Clone Troopers" they turned into yellow light and shot into a similar vortex "I XYZ summon Number 39: Jedi Knight Pax Galaxia!"

From the vortex descended a sealed form that hatched into a armored knight with a cape and light saber. The armor looked sort of like the sort of thing a robotic version of that Obi-Wan person would wear, though the thing had no beard (2500, 2000)

"Now, I attack with both my monsters!" both Numbers descended over a terrified Wynn.

"You want to play with Looping Loot huh, well take these from a few Yusei loops! I activate two Scrap-Iron Scarecrows!" both trap cards sprung off to negate both the lightning and the sword attacks.

Wynn looked at Jack in relief as he tried not to look at her.

It was not to protect her or anything. It was because he didn't want to take 2000+ points in damage (That Sith-hitS probably had some nasty effect to inflict damage, like that oversized pigeon Red Goodwin uses).

"If you're done playing mathematics with my life points, it's my draw!"

Several turns have passed. Vader had 2800 life points and a overlay less Pax Galaxia and a Sith-hitS that had one overlay unit left, while Jack had Wynn and Dark Resonator in a similar state, Twin-Sword Marauder and was missing one of his Scarecrows, but had another trap in place, with 1300 life points.

"Now, for another borrowed card; I normal summon Hyper Synchron!" Yusei's dragon booster tuner (that Jack had stolen during their baseline match with a trap card after the fact) appeared on Jack's field in attack mode (1600,800) "Now, I tune Twin-Sword Maruader and Hyper Synchron!"

Four green loops formed around the Maruader, who was now see through.

""The ruler's heartbeats will now file through here! Take witness to its creation-shaking power! Synchro Summon! My very soul, Red Dragon Archfiend!"

The armored dragon roared to life in a blaze of fury (3000, 2000), starting Wynn and causing her to jump of the way of the roar's shock waves.

"Now, I activate the Space Gate trap card I activated last turn, which allows me to special summon a monster based on how many counters it has. You attacked once last turn, and with that I am able to special summon my Attack Gainer" the masked warrior spun forth in a burst of light (0,0).

"Next, as I control a synchro monster, I can special summon Create Resonator!" the resonator with a fan behind it appeared alongside Attack Gainer (800, 600) "now, I double tune Red Dragon Archfiend with Attack Gainer and Create Resonator!" the tuners turned into flaming rings, that surrounded Red Nova Dragon

"The King and The Devil, here and now, shall become as one. A Raging Spirit! Lift up the very cries of Creation itself! Synchro

Summon! Come forth, Red Nova Dragon" the demonic dragon appeared in a burst of flames (3500, 3000)

"WHOA! WHEN DID JACK ATLAS GET THAT CARD!?"

Jack smirked as his demonic dragon stared down the number cards as it got the power of the tuners lost (5000, 3000). Not even Wynn suddenly hiding behind him from the scary demonic dragon broke his smirk.

This was game, set, and match.

"Red Nova Dragon, attack Number 39 and end this with Burning Soul!"

As a red comet blazed towards Pax Galaxia, Vader waved his hand.

"I activate my Number swap trap card. With this, by removing a Number card in my extra deck from play and detaching an overlay unit on my field, I can activate a monster's effect. I banish Number 19: Savage Glacier and detach a Overlay unit from Sith-hitS, activating the effect of Number 19" two overlay units flew from the ground and surrounded Pax Galaxia "I now activate the ability of Pax Galaxia!"

A overlay unit flew into Pax Galaxia's blade as a energy field emitted from it. Red Nova slammed into Pax Galaxia and sent it flying, but no damage was inflicted.

"I play a card face down, and end my turn"

The intense duel between duel king and Sith Lord was not about to end yet, it would seem.

Card Listings

B2 Battle Droid

(Level 5 Earth Machine type monster)

(1200, 900)

When your opponent controls a monster and you do not control a monster, you can special summon this card from your hand. When you do so, you can special summon up to two B2 Battle Droids from your deck in face up attack mode. If this card changes battle position, its attack and defense becomes 0.

Number 53: Sith-hitS

(Rank 5 Dark Spellcaster)

3 Level 5 Monsters

(100, 0)

Cannot be destroyed in battle except from battle with a Number Monster. Once per turn, you can detach one XYZ Material from this card to select one monster your opponent controls, change its battle position. The targeted card cannot be destroyed by battle, effects, tributed or used in a Fusion, Ritual, Synchro or XYZ summon. Any damage you take from battle with this card is inflicted on your opponent's lifepoints. Any effect damage this card does to the opponent is halved. If this card is destroyed while no XYZ material is attached, you can XYZ summon Number 92: Sith-hitS Dragon from your extra deck, and attach this card to the summoned monster as XYZ material.

Number taken from Dr. Plagueis

Clone Trooper

(Level 4 Light Warrior type monster)

(1400, 300)

When this card is normal summoned, you can special summon one Clone Trooper from your hand or deck. This card cannot be tributed

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Number 39: Jedi Knight Pax Galaxia

(Rank 4 Light Warrior)

2 Level 4 Monsters

(2500, 2000)

Cannot be destroyed in battle except from battle with a Number Monster. Once per turn, during either players turn, you can detach one unit. For the rest of this turn, the controller of this card takes no damage. When this card has no overlay units, the damage its controller takes is doubled

Number Anakin started with

Number 19: Savage Glacier

(Rank 5 Water Beast Warrior type monster)

(2500, 2500)

Cannot be destroyed in battle except from battle with a Number Monster. Once per turn, during either players turn, you can detach an overlay unit from this card; select two monsters in your graveyard and equip them to another Number monster on the field as XYZ material

Number won from Savage, along with Number 61 from Maul, Fiery Maul

8.3 (CrossoverpairingLover... I used that cake joke too soon)

Burn Decks suck

Jack Atlas was aware of the dark truth about his baseline career, on how many of the duellists he faced were paid to lose.

Dragan, sadly, was not a one off occasion.

Sure, not all of them were (Hunter Pace for instance), but it still unnerved him.

He had mixed results telling them directly not to hold back, and the one time he threatened Lazar caused him to be put into the Facility.

(How Yusei handled being in there loop after loop was beyond him. All Jack knew was that he hated loops when he had a criminal mark. The damn thing itched)

This loop, he had gotten Rex and Lazar arrested early on and in general, this loop had came out a lot better.

The Satellite was nicer than it usually was this early on, there were far less dubious deaths and the Arcadia Movement was 13% more open.

Sure, they were still creepy, and the non looping Akiza probably would beat Leo from here to Heartland City if his non looping self tried to duel here (Again), but it was somewhat better.

He was, of course, still the duelling champ, but he was starting to deal with the fact that there was now no filter on certain...obnoxious duelling types.

Anti-Meta burn decks, for instance.

The situation was thus this; Jack had 1000 life point, Dark Resonator (600, 300), Strong Wind Dragon (3400, 1000, who had been summoned from Vice Dragon) and Twin-Sword Marauder (1600, 1000) in attack mode, with his opponent having three Solar Flare Dragons (1500, 1000) in play, with the trap cards Gravity Bind, his opponent's second Vanity's emptiness and shadow spell (Which was currently restraining Dark resonator in attack mode), with 4000 life points.

His opponent had a overly smug look on his face, apparently enjoying the fact he, at the moment, was beating Jack Atlas.

All Jack had in his hand was Wynn, who was currently being quiet for once, perhaps sensing how...troubling the current situation was.

"Give it up Atlas, a power deck is child's play to counter. There isn't a single card in your deck you can draw that can save you now"

"A king doesn't give up until the very end, and I still have one more draw!" Jack shouted as he drew dramatically from his deck, and smirking.

"Is that a smirk? Did I just see a smirk on Jack Atlas! Ladies and Gentleman, this duel isn't over yet!" the announcer shouted as Jack laughed.

"God, I do love that guy. Now, about that, no card can change my fate thing? I activate the Speed Spell, the End of the Storm!"

The cocky fellow's eyes shot up as a huge black storm formed in the midst of the field, engulfing all the monsters.

All six were destroyed, as was Vanity's Emptiness and Shadow spell as both players took damage (100/3100).

The cocky arse countered with a third Vanity's Emptiness, just for the hell of it.

"So what, I don't need special summons or level 4 monsters to beat you. I have a monster in my hand that can kick your sorry arse from here all the way back to the minor leagues." he held up Wynn's card and began to ham it up (As said spirit sprung to lively motion as he did so) "Behold, a card that you cannot stop! The King's understated assassin! Wynn the Wind Charmer, I summon you in attack mode and with you, attack directly!"

A gust of wind formed on the field as the young magician spun around a few times, spinning her staff a few times before pointing it semi menacingly at his foe (500, 1500).

The laughs of his opponent were silenced with a strong whack from Wynn's staff (100/2600).

The opponent then drew a card, before looking furious when he saw he just drew a second Gravity bind.

Jack's turn actually got a monster "What, not drawing any monsters in that lock down deck of yours? First rule of duelling as a king, have plenty of monsters, like so! I summon Creation Resonator!" the fan resonator appeared alongside Wynn (800, 600). "Attack directly!"

The two wind attribute monsters unleashed a combined gust attack on Jack's opponent, blasting a larger chunk from Jack's foe (100/1300).

Gritting his teeth, Jack's opponent drew his own do or die draw...

And he found himself with Royal Decree in his hands. Normally this card could pretty much shut down a turbo duelist. This card could probably kill Yusei Fudo himself.

At this point in time, however...it was a dead man's hand.

"My turn! Draw! Creation Resonator, attack directly!" Jack's foe got a tuning fork in the face, and as the Resonator flew off he saw a charmer fly at him.

"Wynn, end this clown once and for all!"

The cheap burner found a staff whacked in his face as his duel runner shut down and braked in a burst of smoke (100/0)

"AND WHAT A COMEBACK FROM THE MASTER OF FASTER! LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, JACK ATLAS HAS WON THE GAME!"

"You know, I may actually start to like you after all"

"Wait Mr. Atlas, are you saying you didn't like me before?"

"...This is the reason I will never do a Head Professor of Slifer again"

"Mr. Atlas, why did you just say that out loud?"

"...Damn that bird headed freak. He's rubbing off on me!"

8.4 (Thanatos's Scribe) (Apologies in advance to the original author, but those particular symbols do NOT play well with and had to be replaced)

"So you're able to see anyone's 'stats' just by saying Observe'?" Yugi asked Jee-Han Han, the local Anchor, as the two enjoyed their separate treats at the town's ice cream shop, 'The Thin Slice' (A hot fudge sundae for Yugi and double chocolate for Jee-Han.).

"Yep. Pretty cool, if I do say myself." Jee-Han gloated.

"So, what does it say about me?" Yugi inquired, causing for the brown-haired boy to wince.

"I actually haven't checked yet." Jee-Han sheepishly answered, then pointed at Yugi, who had taken another bite out of his sundae, and said, "{Observe.}," causing for a text box to appear next to him:

Name: Yugi Moto

Race: Human

Gender: Male

Title: Master Shadow Battlemage

Level: 14

STR: 10

DEX: 12

VIT: 13

INT: 86

WIS: 74

LUK: 37

Status: Heart of the Cards (When coupled with 'Shadow Mage', the user can materialize Duel Monsters in real life.), Shadow Mage (Any game the user begins, the user cannot lose. +10 INT, +15 WIS), Bearer of the Pyramid (Can let his body be possessed by Yami Yugi, gains 'Shadow Mage', can cast 'Penalty Game')

A duelist hailing from Domino City, Yugi is known as the 'King of Games' due to his victory in the Duelist Kingdom Tournament. However, Yugi holds dark secrets behind his victories, which is known only to a few.

"Huh... that's pretty cool." Yugi said, and Han internally basked in his glory. After a few minutes of gloating, he remembered something that was mentioned in Yugi's description, and he turned back to the chuckling tri-colored male.

"By the way, what did it mean when it is said 'Yami Yugi'?" He asked, and Yugi stopped laughing and looked sheepish at the question.

"Well, to answer that, I'll need for you to turn away for a few seconds." Yugi stated, then grasped the giant pyramid-shaped pendant. Realizing that his fellow Looper was going to cast some sort of 'spell', Jee-Han heeded the boy and turned back to see that Yugi was now taller than before and had a more collected and cocky look.

"{Observe.}"

Name: Yami Yugi

Race: Human

Gender: Male

Title: King of Games, The Nameless Pharaoh

Type: Summoner

Level: 43

STR: 25

DEX: 30

VIT: 20

INT: 107

WIS: 113

LUK: 50

Status: Spirit of the Pyramid (Is bound to the Millennium Pyramid, and can only possess those who are chosen by the Millennium Item.), Heart of the Cards (When coupled with

'Shadow Mage', the user can materialize Duel Monsters in real life.), Shadow Mage (Any game the user begins, the user cannot lose. +10 INT, +15 WIS)

The true King of Games, Yami Yugi was a Egyptian pharaoh who had the power to summon mythical creatures to fight by his side. However, when his kingdom was threatened by a powerful sorcerer, he sacrificed himself to stop it and his spirit was sealed inside of the Millennium Puzzle. Now, 5000 years later, he's trying to find his original name so he can pass on to the afterlife.

"So you're a summoner, huh? Well, I happen to be a summoner, myself!" Jee-Han bragged, and Yami quirked an eyebrow at Jee-Han's statement.

"Is that so? If that's the case, would you mind showing me?" The King of Games asked, and the Gamer bristled at the question. There's no way he'd let this comment pass!

"Alright then, {Summon Earth Elemental}!" Jee-Han chanted, and the earth rose up into a humanoid shape, then burst apart, revealing what looked like a little girl in its place.

"I'd like to see you do a better summon!" Jee-Han challenged, and Noum smiled happily at her summoner. In response, Yami smirked, and held up a red trading card in two fingers.

"You know, I didn't mean 'trump my summon with a better summon', I didn't mean a 200-foot long thunder dragon of doom!" Han gasped out as Yami Yugi, Noum, and himself jumped off of a rooftop and onto a deserted road.

"Just shut up and run!" Yami snapped back as the trio fled the city with Silfer flying over it and every once in a while letting out a mighty roar before firing another beam of lightning at any monster that tried to attack it.

8.5 (Oh wow I had seriously forgotten how many CrossoverpairingLover wrote)

A duel that should never happen

Yuma and Jaden were hiding in Barian World under a blanket under his bed.

That was the first clue to Nash/Shark that something was wrong.

"Alright, why the hell are you two hiding here...particularly you Yuma, considering you're legally a citizen of Astral World and I may be legally required to stab you"

"We...sort of need to hide here for the rest of the loop" Jaden admitted as Nash glared at them.

"If you were the person who revealed to Alexis, Akiza and my sister that Jiraiya used them as inspiration for that Icha Icha book, I am not helping you hide from their misplaced but warranted fury" the Barian King deadpanned.

"No, worse" Yuma yelled as Nash actually looked concerned.

"...Please don't tell me Jaden gave Nightshroud the Anti-Life Equation, again"

Jaden rapidly shook his head, though he felt annoyed that he brought that up. That was an accident.

"That highly perverted and energetic unknowing goddess and the Spiral Warrior are duelling" Astral decided to spit it out where the other two weren't willing to "Yugi and Yusei have already been lost to the resulting use of a Black Hole spell card".

Nash suddenly lost all color in his entire form.

"...Yeah, about that attack on Earth. We're not doing it"

Nash was blunt to his fellow Barians, who all looked shocked.

Well, not Marin, but she didn't really want to blow up the earth.

"Why the hell not!?" Girag demanded as Nash shook his head.

"Because there won't be anything left to attack" Nash informed them.

There was no way a clash between Simon and Haruhi, and all the reality bending that would result, would not destroy the Earth, and quite possibly the solar system as well.

8.6 (I'm running out of witty things to say regarding CrossoverpairingLover)

Rank Up Tiragon

Yuma just looked annoyed as Flip was going power mad due to stealing Utopia and Leviathan Dragon...again.

Normally, he looped early enough that he could avoid this scenario, or late enough Flip had already done it.

But, this time he had just woken up right in the middle of it, on the turn he won the first time around.

That time, he had used stinging swordsman and Baby Tiragon together to win...but this time he still had a card to draw, and an idea in his head.

"Give it up Yuma! Your Numbers, your power, they are all mine!" his troubled friend yelled in a crazed mantra.

"A wise...well, a man once told me that the duel is not over until the last card is played" Yuma countered "And I'm going to prove him right with this draw. After all, do you know what separates a duelist from a great duelist?"

"Not being you?" Trip snarked as Yuma's hand began to glow.

"No, a skilled duelist is able to always draw the card he needs. Behold, SHINING DRAW!" in a huge flash of light, Yuma drew from his deck the perfect card, created just for this situation.

"...Dramatic much?" Bronk shook his head as Tori suddenly looked like she got a major case of Deja Vu to an unloopers perspective, but waking up by a loopers "Yuma, just shouting cool names into the air won't let you draw the perfect..."

"I activate Rank-Up Magic, Counter Force!"

"What magic!?" Flip demanded, both his number marks flashing in shock.

"With this card, I can rank up a XYZ monster on my field by the total ranks of the XYZ monsters you control. You control the Rank 4 Utopia and Rank 3 Leviathan Dragon, which allows me to rank up Baby Tiragon to Rank 8!"

Baby Tiragon eagerly jumped up into the air as a burst of shining light surrounded it.

"What...what kind of spell card is that Yuma!?" Bronk demanded "I've never seen one like it before"

"A totally awesome one" Yuma boasted

"So...you don't know"

Yuma looked annoyed that Bronk would say that (but then...it was early in his baseline), as the light faded away to reveal a very, very big and badass looking dragon glaring down a now terrified Trip.

"Yuma...that was overkill" Tori, who had woke up only as Yuma Shining drawed, complained to Yuma as he smirked while holding up his new CXYZ monster.

"Hey, CXyz Emperor Tiragon is so going to be my ace this loop. That debut was all kinds of incredible"

"You also caused Trip to lose control of his bowels" Astral deadpanned

"...That was less awesome"

Kite glared at Yuma "Where is your number, don't play games with me. That thing is no match for my Galaxy Eyes" Baby Tiragon glared at the unawake Kite and his Galaxy Eyes during their first duel as Yuma drew a card.

"I don't need it today" he smirked as he activated one of his many Rank-Up magic cards he had taken to collecting over the loops.

He had at least 50 varieties that didn't appear in the baseline, and this one was a fun one.

Kite just stared in horror as his Galaxy Eyes and his opponents...'dragon', were sucked into a glowing sphere, as something else came out.

Tori just facepalmed as Yuma mentally scared the non looping Kite.

"So, I take it you failed?" Dumon, temporary leader of the Barians while Nash was...away, deadpanned to the foetal positioned Mizar, who was currently shivering.

"Tiragon...Tiragon...Tiragon" the Galaxy Eyes wielder was mumbling incoherently.

"Sigh...I need new elite warriors"

"You know, I always did want one of these" Yuma commented holding up a Number 107 "Say, how do we remove the Don Thousand mojo from this thing?"

(CXyz Emperor Tiragon)

Rank 8 Earth Dragon

Four Level 8 Monsters

Once per turn, you can target one level 4 or lower monster; that card can attack your opponent directly this turn. If this card has Baby Tiragon as an XYZ material, it gains the following effects

Once per turn, during either players turn, you can remove one overlay unit: destroy all cards your opponent controls, and draw one card for each card destroyed. Spells and Traps cannot be activated in response to this effect

Attack 4000

Defense 3000

8.7 (CrossoverpairingLover)

Heroic-Champion, Zoro

Yuma blinked once, then twice, at the looper who had replaced Nistro this loop as he prepared to save Trip from Mr. Heartland's

enforcers (with Number 96 dealt with Astral's Fuinjutsu and Yuma's Emperor Tiragon Dragon blasting it with fire a few times, thus allowing Astral to be with him this time)

"Why do you have green hair?!" Yuma finally asked as Astral face palmed.

Said green haired, tall swordsmen with three swords on him just stared at him.

"Your hair is blue and purple, spikes unnaturally and resembles something Sanji cooks after Usopp fishes it out of the water, you have no right to insult my hair!" Roranoa Zoro snapped at Yuma as he activated his D-Pad "For that, I'm not going to go easy on ya, kid"

"Any particular reason you would go easy on him at all Zoro?" Dextra inquired as she also prepared her D-Pad.

"Yuma..." Astral began as Yuma started his own D-Pad

"Yeah yeah, apologize after I beat his rookie butt"

A few turns later

"With Heroic Challenger Extra Sword, and Heroic Challenger Spartan" Zoro yelled (while using the deck Nistro generally saved until he was off the clock) "I form the Overlay network!"

The two brown lights shot into the air as Yuma (Who had Leviathan Dragon at 3000 attack points and Crimson Ninja at 2400 attack point), grimaced as he had a good idea what Zoro was summoning.

"I XYZ summon, Heroic Champion, Excalibur!"

As the large warrior stood over Yuma with more attack points than usual, Yuma gulped.

For a rookie with only Loop Memories to base his skills on for duelling, Zoro wasn't half bad.

A few more turns later

"Volcasaurus's effect activates!" Yuma yelled as his next number swallowed one of its overlay units "By detaching an overlay unit, I can target one monster you control, destroy it, and inflict damage equal to its attack points. I choose your Excalibur!"

Zoro's eyes went wide as the giant fire dinosaur let loose a fireball right at his ace monster, destroying it and winning the duel (and sparing Trip deportation).

"Yuma, you do know it was advised not to make an enemy of the Straw Hat Pirates, right? I'd rather not be attacked by a rubber man, a monster ungulate or Sogeking if I can help it" Astral deadpanned as Yuma turned to him.

"Hey, you know as well as I do that duelling is good for making friends. I'm telling you, one more duel with him and he won't be on my case for this loss"

"I forget the ability of people like you, the other Duelling anchors, that Nanoha girl and others to make friends by beating people up" Astral deadpanned.

8.8 (Midnight Crescent)

Twilight the Underdog - Chapter 5

Nyx sighed as the nurse left her room. "Tristan, are you there?"

"Yeah, I'm here," Tristan returned to his chair. "You alright there, Nyx?"

Nyx nodded slightly. "Just wish they'd stop poking me already. Are they gonna stop doing that before Momma gets back?"

"Sorry, but they usually don't." Tristan leant back in his chair, trying to think how things usually went for Serenity in the baseline. "I spoke to Twilight while I was outside."

"Why didn't you wait?" Nyx turned to face him, a small pout starting. "I wanted to talk to her too!"

"I know, and I'm sorry." Tristan kept his voice soft. "But given my nap, I figured letting her know nothing had happened was probably a good idea. Did Yugi tell you what happened at the shop after she beat his Grandpa?"

Nyx giggled and nodded.

"Now imagine what she'd have been like if I'd put the call off any more."

Nyx winced. "Ok, point taken," she yawned as she leant back into her pillow "So what do we do now?"

"No idea," Tristain replied, shrugging his shoulders for his own benefit. "I'd teach you to duel, but they don't make Braille cards," Tristain thought for a few seconds, before something came to him. "And I doubt you'd be able to use them even if I did."

Nyx shook her head. "Braille isn't something momma's got round to teaching me yet."

Tristan sat in thought for a few seconds "Hey, I know. Why don't you tell me about your baseline?"

Nyx froze for a few seconds. "M-my baseline?"

"Yeah, we're gonna be spending a fair bit of time together. Might be easier if we know a bit more about each other."

"W-well, why not tell me yours first?" Nyx folded her arms across her chest.

"Nyx... Is something wrong?" Tristan looked concerned at the sudden shift in the girl's personality. "If you don't want to talk about it, then don't worry. I can always just ask Twi..."

"NO!" Nyx practically screamed the word. "I... I'll tell you... Just, don't mention this to Twilight."

"Alright, I promise." Tristan watched the girl carefully. Her voice seemed to be all over the place. From her usual speaking manner, to a petulant child. And now, she sounded... old. Old and tired.

Nyx took one deep calming breath, and mentally prepared herself for what she was about to do. "I'm... not from the baseline..." Nyx's voice shrank as she spoke.

"You're not from your baseline?" Tristan raised an eyebrow. "How does that work?"

Nyx bit her lip. "It's a long story. And if I start, I can't stop," Nyx took a few deep breaths. "No matter how much you'll want me to, how much I'll want to, if I start telling you, you need to hear it all. "

Tristan thought for a few seconds. *OK, on the one hand, she really doesn't want to tell this story. But, it sounds like this is weighing down on her pretty bad...* Tristan massaged his temple, as he struggled to come up with a solution.

After almost a minute, he had his answer. "Alright, tell me."

Nyx nodded slowly. She closed her eyes, took one deep breath, and started her story.

Nyx was worried by how long the silence lasted after she'd finished. "Tr...Tristan, are you still there?" Her voice was shaky, and tears

were slowly rolling down her face.

"I'm still here Nyx," his voice was small. He gulped before he continued. "I just need to think, okay? You kinda dropped a lot on me."

"I'm so..." Nyx started, but Tristan cut her off.

"Don't. I asked you to tell me. It's on me. It's just... a lot to take in at once. Give me a few minutes."

"A...Alright." Nyx said, before rolling over, sinking her face into the pillows as much as she could without smothering herself.

Tristan rested his elbows on his knees, and sank his head into his hands, as he thought over everything he'd been told over the last few hours.

Alright, first question, do I believe her? He asked himself *. Well, if she was lying, why would she say she's the reincarnation of an evil personality?* He considered that for a few seconds, before he realised he didn't really have any response. *Good point... So, what do I do?*

After a few minutes, he reviewed the story in his head one last time, trying to break it down.

So, she was intended to be pure evil.

She sure didn't turn out that way. And she didn't ask for it either...

She did turn back into Nightmare Moon...

Did she really? She never really acted like what that cult expected. And, again, she didn't ask for that. They had to lead her into doing anything they wanted. And even then, she wasn't what they wanted. She even saved the town full of people who wanted to be rid of her. And they still didn't trust her.

Can you blame them?

Can you hear yourself?

Tristan snapped bolt upright at that last thought, the warring voices in his head quickly replaced by his own.

She's alone, she's scared, and she can't even see. I'm here to help her through this, and instead I just set about making her feel worse. Why am I even thinking about what I should do here?

Tristan got up from his chair, and picked up one of the pieces of paper from the table.

Now what on earth do I get instead of daffodils? I'm pretty sure people can't eat those...

A knock on the door brought Nyx out of her stupor. She heard Tristan talking with someone at the door, before someone was walking over.

"Oh, hey Nyx. Didn't realise you were still awake." Tristan said, as he placed something on the overbed table. "I got you something to eat."

Nyx looked down a little."I...I'm not hungry..."

"Not even for celery soup?"

Nyx's head snapped up towards Tristan's voice, as her eyes widened. "Did you say..."

"Yep. Sorry, but I'm pretty sure daffodils are pretty bad for us though, so I got you grilled cheese instead. I remember I used to have them with soup when I was a kid."

"Why," Nyx asked, biting her lip. "Why did you do this?"

Tristan sat in his chair. "You told me your story, and I said I needed to think about how I felt. I'll admit, I took longer than I should..."

Tristain laughed sheepishly, before sighing. "You had a bad deal in your baseline Nyx. One you didn't deserve. And now you're stuck here without Twilight. I'm here to look after you for her. I can't be her, but I can at least do this."

Nyx's lip quivered, as she held her arms open. Tristan hugged the crying girl.

"Thank you..." She whispered in his ear.

"No problem..." he replied, as he broke the embrace. He sat back in his chair.

"Umm..." Nyx's voice was small, as she waved her arms slowly in front of her. "Could you... move the table closer?"

"Oh, sure." Tristan moved the table a little closer, as a beeping noise came from the laptop behind him. "Huh? What's going on... OH! The duels must be starting!" Tristan, took a few quick steps toward the laptop, and began sorting through pop-ups and windows. "Hmm...Well, it looks like Yugi's up first," Tristain said, as he finally opened up the stream. "Not really surprising, but it'll give us a chance to fix any issues with the set-up before Twilight's first match."

Tristan turned up the volume, and put the video to full screen. However, it didn't take long to notice there was a problem.

"Has it started yet?" Nyx asked, unable to see the video.

"Sorry, sound isn't coming through. Give me a sec."

Tristan started to fiddle with a few options, before the sound from the stream finally came through the speakers.

"Exodia, Obliterate!" Yami's voice was closely followed by a low, guttural roar.

"What's going on?" Nyx asked, inching away from the sound. "What's making that noise?"

"It's the monster Yami's using." Tristain watched as a bright light enveloped Weevil's monster, and the counter in the corner of the screen plummeted to 0. "Or was, at least... jeez, Yami's pretty scary when he gets into it..."

"It's over already?"

"Yeah, sorting the sound out took longer than I wanted, and that duel was pretty short... Still, at least everything should work fine next time."

It took less than half an hour for the alert to sound again.

"Hey, looks like Twilight's about to have her first duel."

Nyx froze as Twilight's voice drifted through the speakers. "Applejack?"

"What!?"

Umm... Yami? Yugi's voice echoed in the pair's mind.

Yes, Yugi?

That card doesn't normally look like that, does it?

No. No it doesn't...

Could it be this Applejack Twilight's talking about?

No, Yugi. The holograms do not have a soul.

Ha ha Yami, Yugi deadpanned. *You know that's not what I mean...*

Oh... That... Yami paused. *I'm afraid I'm not sure. But given how Twilight's taking this, I hope not. For both their sake...*

Yugi opened his eyes, and turned his attention back to the duel. He walked over to Twilight's podium. "Josie, it's not her."

"But it looks just..."

"I know. It's more complicated than I can say, but we don't have time. For now, just trust me. It's not her."

Twilight looked between the all-too-familiar humanised Applejack on the field, and Yugi. She sighed, before collecting her cards. "I hope you're right."

She turned back to her opponent. She faked a sheepish smile. "Sorry, first time using one of these, wasn't expecting that..."

"Well, you better adjust quick. I'm not going to take it easy on you just because you're new."

"You'd better not," Twilight looked back over her hand, as she tried to remember what her plan had been. "Now, as I was saying, I place one card face down," she said, as she placed her mirror force onto the field. "I guess that will do for now."

"Alright, my turn." Mike drew a card from his deck, and looked over his hand, a smile on his face. "Well, it's my lucky day. I place two cards face down," he said, as two of the slots on his field became filled with a dull light. "And I summon my Harpie's Elder Brother in Attack mode," A winged man appeared opposite Twilight's only creature. "Did I mention, he gains an attack and defence boost, thanks to the mountains in our field?" Twilight watched as the new monster grew in size. "Your turn."

Even with that boost, it only has 1980 Attack points? Why summon such a weak monster? Twilight thought as she moved to draw her card. *He must have a trap lined up. Well, I can easily avoid that...*

"First, before I draw a card, my Fortune Lady Earth gains an extra 400 attack and defence points. That also means you take 400 points

of Life Point damage." Twilight said, watching his counter tick down to 1600, before drawing her card. "Next, I summon my Magician Valkyria in attack mode. That ends my turn."

"Scared to attack me directly, little girl?" Mike asked, as he pulled a card from his deck. "I can't say I'm surprised. I activate my Cyber Shield," one of the squares of light vanished, as Mike's monster became encased in a strange suit of armour, and its attack points rose. "Now, you gave me something nice for target practice. It would be a shame to waste it. Harpie's Brother, take out that Valkyria thing."

"Not so fast!" Twilight said, as she flipped over her face down card. "I activate my mirror force, sending that right back at you."

Don't party just yet. If that's meant ta be Mai, an' I think it is, then trust me, he has a plan...

"Alright, seriously!" Twilight said, looking around. "Who just said that?"

"Josie..." Yugi looked worried as he spoke. "No-one said anything..."

Mike grimaced, before muttering "Figures I'd pick the crazy one to duel..." He shook his head, before flipping over his second face down card. "Either way, I activate my Negate Attack trap, to stop my Harpie Brother's attack before it even started."

Told ya he'd have a plan... The voice retorted.

Twilight took a breath, and thought. *Ok, so whoever this is knows how to duel, speaks in something like a Brooklyn accent... Twilight screwed up her face as the realisation hit her. Oh great. I think I've got the person who I've replaced in my head... This is just fantastic... Alright Twilight, focus on the duel first. Worry about the voices in your head later, they'll wait.*

She turned back to the field to see that there was once again another square of light in Mike's magic and trap zone. He was tapping his fingers on his podium. "You can go anytime now..."

"Okay, my Fortune Lady's strength increases again, dealing 400 points of damage to your Life Points again." Twilight said before drawing another card. "And now, I summon my Fortune Lady Wind."

Once the summoning light had faded, everyone involved was staring at the field.

Tea was the first to speak. "Yugi, that card isn't meant to have rainbow hair, is it?"

Yugi shook his head. "No, it isn't. But I think I can guess what's happened..." he said, before a thought struck him. Six Fortune Ladies. Six friends. All things considered, I probably shouldn't be all that surprised...

"Oh, good." Tea said. "I was worried it was just me seeing things or something."

Twilight, being the only one to expect something like this, only took a couple of seconds to recover. "Now, when I normal summon her to the field, I can destroy one magic or trap card for every Fortune Lady I have on the field. So, kiss that armor and your face down card goodbye," Twilight smiled as the armor shattered around the monster, and the light faded from the field. "And then, my Fortune Lady Earth will deal with your monster, and the rest of your Life Points." Twilight smiled as the Applejack lookalike raised her staff. An orange orb of magic flew towards the monster opposite her, and disintegrated the monster. As Mike's Life Counter hit zero, the holograms faded.

Mike looked shocked at the carnage that had occurred. "Three turns..." He tried to gather his cards together, but kept dropping them, his hands shaking. "How... How did you beat me so fast?"

"You didn't think I stood a chance." Twilight said, only realising what she was saying half way through. "There's faith in your deck, and there's arrogance. I think you need to take a day and see if you can remember the difference. You're not out of the tournament yet..." Twilight said, as she collected her prize. She climbed down to the others as mike walked off, lost in thought.

"Yugi, we need to talk. Away from any prying eyes..." Twilight said as quietly as she could.

Yugi nodded. He looked around, and waited until everyone was looking away. A few seconds later the trio had disappeared into the forest.

Tristan watched the black screen in shock. I know Yugi likes to give the guests an easy time, but damn. That was insane...

"Wow, momma is really good at this duelling thing, huh?"

"You said it, Nyx..." Tristan said, as he closed the stream again. "You said it..."

After five minutes walking, Tea, Yugi and Twilight stopped walking. "Alright, I don't think anyone would follow us this far in. What's bothering you, Twilight?"

"I... think Joey's in my head..." Twilight said, waiting for the others reactions. "I keep hearing things. In a Brooklyn accent..."

"Can you remember any of it?" Yugi asked. "We know him better, if it's him, we'll know."

"Well, before the duel started, the voice said 'Well, at least he ain't pullin' Mai's two-bit psychic bull...'."

"Yeah, that sounds like Joey." Tea said, sighing. "What do we do, Yugi?"

"Can you communicate with him?"

"I don't know, I haven't tried..." Twilight said, before thinking Can you hear me, Joey?

After a minute with no response, Twilight shook her head. "Either he isn't listening, isn't answering, is pulling some sort of prank, or he can't hear me."

"Alright. I'm not sure what we can do right now, other than carry on. But we definitely need to look into this at some point. This more than just the odd random comment..." Yugi took a deep breath. "By the way, Twilight. There's something else we need to talk about..."

"Yes, Yugi?"

"Remember how I said those holograms aren't your friends?"

"Yeah. Although you said it's complicated..."

"Like I said, there's a part of my loop – it doesn't happen every time – but it's possible your friends may Awaken during that time. It's not certain, and even then, we try to just completely shortcut that part, but..."

"They might be around for that..." Twilight completed the thought, and gulped as she realised what he was saying. "How does that even work?"

"I'm not entirely sure..."

"Have you ever awoken as a card before?"

"No, I ha..." Yugi started, but Twilight cut him off with her next question before he could answer.

"What's it like Awakening as a card? Do you only exist for duels? Are you fully aware? Or is it more like a sense of Paralysis until you're played?"

"I don't kno..."

"What happens if you get destroyed?"

"Twil..." Yugi tried to interrupt, but it was futile.

"What happens if you're removed from the game?"

"Twilight..." Yugi tried to speak more forcefully, but the result was no different.

She gasped before her final question. "What happens if someone destroys the card? Do you just go to another copy? Or is your Loop over? And what about Monster Reb..."

Yugi grabbed the foreign anchor's shoulders, and gave her a gentle shake, breaking her concentration. "Twilight! I don't know!" Once it was clear he had her attention, he lowered his voice, and let her go again. "I've never looped in like that. They don't loop in often, and the how and why varies from Loop to Loop. But from what I remember, sometimes they just go to the card graveyard. Sometimes they're just aware while they're in play. Sometimes they can project themselves out from the cards, like spirits. And sometimes, the first time the card leaves play, the Looper is gone for the rest of the loop. I can't say what this Loop has in store, but you have to ask yourself: Do you really want to take that risk?"

Twilight gulped, before taking six cards out of her deck. She looked at them, but at one in particular.

Fortune Lady Light. She hadn't really thought of the cards effect. And then what that would mean. No...

"If it comes to that, I'll take them out of my deck for a while. I'm not going to risk them like that."

Yugi nodded. After a few minutes, he checked his watch "I think we should probably start heading out toward the docks. There's something we might need to cut off. Pegasus seems nice this time, but that doesn't always mean anything."

Twilight slid the cards back into her deck. "Lead the way..."

8.9 (CrossoverpairingLover)

Dropping an moral anvil, sort of speak

"You know what separates a good duelist from a great duelist?" Jaden, having found himself waking up just as he was duelling Chazz in the early days, with the gigantic VWXYZ Dragon Catapult Cannon staring him down.

It was somewhat nostalgic to go back to such a simple part of his life; when it was all about duelling with his fusion heroes without Dark Signers, the Society of Light and when Chazz was just an arrogant prick, as oppose to a anti heroic prick.

Sure, that also meant Chazz and Crowler were trying to make his life miserable, but Jaden couldn't help but find it somewhat funny to simply throw a monkey wrench into their plans

"I don't know, the cards? The skills? The jacket" Chazz huffed as he billowed his Obelisk Blue cloak for dramatic effect "As a Slifer Slacker, you don't have any of it. Elemental Heroes are weak, you have the skill of my old trainers from duelling pre-school, and your just a step away from flunking out! That's what separates a great duelist, like me, from a pathetic one like you!"

Jaden stared right back at him with a frown "First off, I use the Elemental Heroes because they resonate with me. The great duellists use decks that register with them on a level that can't be replicated, be it a single deck or several different ones they alternate for the heck of it. I've used my heroes through thick and thin, while you just got that deck. (BE SILENT SLACKER!) Strong Decks, Weak Decks, Good Decks and Bad Decks, there is no such thing. Just bad duellists. I mean, what kind of duelist can only win with a deck that isn't even their own, or just a copy of someone else's because it worked for that person?"

"I believe in the power of my deck, in a way that someone like you can never understand" and Chazz would never understand until he started using one deck and one deck only after his North Academy visit, Jaden had actually found that Chazz didn't change for the better without that trip and just changed decks constantly trying to beat him.

With Chazz sufficiently steamed at him and spouting various profanities, Jaden noted his hand and graveyard.

Like last duel, he had already used Clayman, Burstiniatrix, a Hero Emerges and Sparkman, so they were the grave and his life points were 1000 to Chazz's 4000. Right now his hand (which was different) had the spell cards Miracle Fusion and Feather Shot, and had just drawn Megamorph.

Game, set and match, and he didn't even had to wake up to draw these cards. There was a reason he was agreed upon to be the luckiest duelling looper, and probably one of the luckiest loopers currently looping.

"Now I activate Miracle Fusion! With this card, I can remove Heroes from my graveyard to fusion summon! I fuse Sparkman and Clayman from my graveyard to create the Elemental Hero Thunder Giant!"

Chazz yawned dramatically as the fusion monster rose up from a spiralling vortex from the graveyard (2400, 1500).

"Yeah yeah, I know how that card works slacker, and in case your math skills are as bad as I think they are, allow me to point out that you cannot destroy my Cannon with that midget"

"Not quite done yet Chazz, I activate the Equip Spell Megamorph!"

Chazz's eyes went wide in horror as a glowing light surrounded the giant (4800, 1500).

"Because I have less life points than you do, this spell card doubles my monster's attack points. Now the fun begins, for you see by discarding one card" Jaden sent Feather Shot to the grave "I can destroy one card you control that is weaker than thunder giant, and unless I am mistaken, that means your Cannon!"

A burst of lightning shot from Thunder Giant, obliterating it as Chazz stepped back in terror.

"You can't do this, your nothing but a slacker..."

Jaden grinned "I may be a slacker, but that's in academics. When it comes to duelling, I'm all game, and this game's over! Thunder Giant, attack Chazz directly, Voltic thunder!"

A second burst of electric power slammed into Chazz, sending him to the ground lightly roasted and without a single lifepoint left to him.

"And that's game!"

8.10 (CrossoverpairingLover)

With that ALS challenge going around, why not an official Cardlocke snippet?

Yugi, Jaden, Yuma and Astral watched the video clip of Yusei's last duel with Roman Goodwin in impressed shock, before they all began

to clap politely as Yusei eyed all of them with a frown.

"There, I did it. After 5 attempts, a Perfectly Ultimate Great Moth run with the overgrown bug taking down each and every of my baseline dark signer opponents."

"It really took that long?" Yuma cocked his head in confusion at that one "It only took me two runs to win each of my baseline duels with Gagaga Cowboy, and that Moth is way more powerful"

"It is also incredibly annoying to summon" Yugi pointed out "Believe me, you have no idea the hassle Weevil has to go through whenever he brings it out. There is a reason he swapped his ace to Insect Queen after a while"

"Well, now it's your turn to do a Ace Cardlocke challenge again Yuma" Jaden commented on this little set of challenges they got up on occasion to keep themselves entertained "I vote you have to win each of your duels with Number 34 in some way, shape or form"

"I did that already" Yuma pointed out as Jaden looked confused.

"You did?"

"He did, that was his second one after his Leviathen Dragon run" Yugi confirmed.

"He's managed to win with all the numbers he obtained prior to his duel with Vetrix, plus Cowboy, Excalibur and Tiragon" Yusei elaborated.

"Oh..."

Yeah, they had been doing this a while.

"What about an Exodia run?" Astral suggested "That would be interesting, last I checked Exodia is something that our loops never really touched upon or even mentioned at any point"

"But those decks aren't any fun to duel" Yuma and Jaden complained in unison

"You could just put the five cards in your deck without any specific draw support and not shining draw them" Yugi suggested.

As the burning light faded and the glowing 17 removed from him, Shark woke up and promptly glared at Yuma.

"Exodia, really Yuma?"

"What, I was dared to!"

Kite was similarly glaring at Yuma as he woke up after getting a fist full of Exodia.

"Hey, why are you complaining? Didn't your Dad make your deck or something?" Yuma pointed out.

"At least you can counter that with Mirror Force Yuma, you can't counter Exodia"

Yuma glared at Vector, who looked rather smug.

"Oh, did I mill out your precious Exodia and banish his legs? Too bad, that was the only way you could ever defeat me! There isn't a card in your deck that can save you now!"

He was right too. Even if he shining drew a card to put Exodia's parts back in his hand from both the graveyard and from the removed from play pile, that would still break the streak.

He would have to try again with Exodia next loop...all because of Vector.

For that...Yuma was going to introduce him to Emperor Tiragon.

Yusei couldn't help but feel a foreboding feeling go through him as he emerged in Neo Domino City... and Jack was standing on the highway, staring at him. He knew the blond looper was Awake, he wasn't the only one who had answered the Ping so far this loop though... but that smirk on his face meant that Jack had something in mind.

"Jack?"

"Yuuuusei." Jack said, stretching the word out as his smirk seems to get wider.

"Please don't tell me you're trying to go for that joke."

"What joke Yusei?"

The mechanic, Tail and Head Bearer and eldest of the Yugioh anchors sighed. "Fine, let's get it over with, Card Games on Motorcycles."

"CARD GAMES ON MOTORCYCLES?"

"Card Games on... oh no you didn't..."

"CROW DID YOU HEAR THAT? CARD GAMES ON MOTORCYCLES!"

Said red-haired looping duelist popped up from behind the road barrier. "Card Games on Motorcycles?" He asked.

"Card Games on Motorcycles." Akiza confirmed as she stepped out from a nearby alley with her own Runner in tow.

"Card Games on Motorcycles?" Leo and Luna repeated in unison as they skated down the road towards the others.

"CARD GAMES ON MOTORCYCLES." Jack shouted.

Silence engulfed the area for a moment... and then the six just burst out laughing. "Oh wow... how long have you guys been waiting to use that one on me?" Yusei asked.

"A few loops." Akiza chuckled. "It was worth it to see you confused for once."

"Makes me glad this part of Neo-Domino is deserted though. Jack's megaphone of a voice could wake the dead up." Crow remarked... "Case in point, Carly."

"Shut your beak Crow or I'll make you." Jack replied... but he kept the smile on his face.

Suddenly the group could hear the whining of engines. "Ah, that'd be Trudge?" Luna asked. "He's taking a while... good hand Yusei?"

Yusei simply nodded, smiling himself. "We should probably get to the stadium if we want to meet up anywhere." He stated, getting onto his Duel Runner, not entirely shocked to see that Crow had brought his own with.

"And last one there is a Kuriboh Token!" Leo declared before he and Luna sped off. Crow and Akiza soon followed after, leaving Jack and Yusei at the area. Jack simply smiled and reached into his pocket, tossing Stardust Dragon towards Yusei as the two friends silently got on their Runners and sped off. Yusei could already tell this would be a good loop.

Chapter 9

9.1. (Thanatos's Scribe)

"Let's play a game, Pharaoh," Bakura said, and darkness spread out of him until the rest of those present were enveloped by the darkness.

Atem barely blinked as the darkness covered him. He had already been through the whole ordeal several times, and he knew how to defeat Bakura easily without losing any of the others. However, when he tried to take a step forward, he felt a tug at his leg.

'Wait, what?' he thought, and looked down to find himself shackled to the floor, and the darkness finished moulding to reveal a decrepit room with four monitors in the far wall showing Tristan, Joey, Tea, and Yugi; a counter with five lights in the center of the room with a Duel Disk next to it; and several cards scattered around the room.

"Hello, Pharaoh," a familiar voice said, and Atem looked to the right to see the puppet from Magical Marionette standing by itself in the far corner and looking in his general area.

"As you can see, I have placed your friends in separate stasis chambers and there is a multitude of Dueling cards placed in your reach. In order to free your friends, you have to play a series of cards to deactivate the stasis fields. If you play the right combination, then one of your friends will be set free, with a chance to free yourself last. If you do not play the right combination within the time limit, then one of them at random will be cursed with the same penalty that Kaiba faced. So what do you say, Pharaoh: Do you accept?"

Atem paled when he realized the consequences of not completing the task in time, and then hardened his gaze as he readied his

response.

"Alright, let's play," he answered as the puppet faded away, and he began to think about the dilemma he was in while also making a note to keep Bakura away from all Saw movies next time he was in the Hub Loop.

9.2.

Yusei blinked as he Awoke... and sighed as he looked around. Purple flames were all around him. Someone who wasn't Kalin was riding theirDuel Runner up ahead and his own was painted black with a red lining. It wasn't the first time he had looped in as a Dark Signer, but it was always a little annoying. Confusing as well. "So what are you going to do Dark Signer?" The person up ahead jeered. Yusei blinked as he quickly looked down at the display to see whom he was fighting. Of all people it happened to be Hunter Pace. "It seems you're just like every other Turbo Duelist now that you ended the world! It's pathetic, quite frankly!"

Yusei rolled his eyes as he sped along, deciding to analyse the situation a bit more in-depth. Somehow Pace had managed to summon both Supersonic Skull Flame (2600/2000) and Skull Flame (2600/2000) to the field, and had 3000 Life points, as well as 12 Speed Counters, Speed Booster, and two face down monsters. Yusei on the other hand had no monsters on the field and only 500 life points, as well as ameagre 2 Speed Counters. And he had apparently just drawn as he Awoke, for three cards in his hand. At that moment, the memories hit him... and he glared. "At least I'm not raiding one of the human settlements for fun!" he yelled as he only barely managed to contain his rage... at least until one took a glimpse at his arm, a hand Nazca mark glowing bright purple. "Our mission was against the Signers-"

"And you brought down the whole world with ya!" Pace cried out with glee. "And now ol' Hunter Pace gets to be the hero, no matter how

nasty I was, stopping the EEEEVIL Dark Signer Yusei Fudo!" Yusei couldn't help but grimace at that... The memories were still jumbled as to why the world hadn't ended, but there was something about Jack and Red Nova, and suddenly he wasn't so surprised anymore. "And the best part? I ain't even bringing my A-game yet!"

"Then maybe I should shut you up by playing the Speed Spell - Angel Baton!" Yusei declared. "I don't think I need to tell a 'pro' like you were that this lets me draw two cards and discard one, as long as I have 2 Speed Counters!" Yusei declared as he drew, then looked at his hand and discarded a card. "Now, while I have the card I just discarded in my graveyard I can remove two machine-type monsters to summon it back to the field. I remove my Quillbolt Hedgehog and my Tuningware!" Yusei declared as the two machine monsters appeared on the field, and then fell apart into mechanical debris. "Now rise from your grave, Dark Tuner monster, Junk Hermit!" (500/1500) As Yusei declared this the junk rose up into the air, circling around into a whirlwind of mechanical parts. Eventually it stopped and in its place stood Junk Hermit. The monster itself had the face of an elderly version of Junk Synchron with a stooped back only held up by the Junk Warrior chest armour and a cane looking like the broken axe of Junk Berserker, its legs looking like they had been salvaged from Junk Gardna and the arms looking as if Junk Destroyer and Archer (for the arms without and with the cane respectively) had gotten the same treatment. The monster looked at Hunter Pace slowly then looked at Yusei with a slow nod. The elderly monster seemed to be only moving forward due to the chest armour thrusters spluttering away.

Pace laughed. "That decrepit monster looks like he crawled out of a worse junkyard than the rest of your monsters. What could he possibly do to me anyway? He's a tuner with a level of 10, that's useless!" he declared.

"You claim my monster is decrepit, you call them junk, and you insult them by calling them useless. It's about time you were taught a lesson in humility, Pace!" Yusei said. "Because Junk Hermit was

revived from the Graveyard, I can Special Summon my Doppelwarrior from my hand." (800/800) With a flash of light a soldier with a ghostly afterimage behind him materialized, standing in front of the Hermit with his gun raised. The two sped around a corner of the flaming geoglyph around them as Yusei spotted that in the center of it was a village... a village that Pace had been attacking, if his memories were correct. One that he had decided to protect to make up for his mistakes. He gripped the handlebars of his Duel Runner as they sped along, starting to weave around the fingers slowly. "And now I'll show you just how useful Junk Hermit can be. I didn't just call him a Dark Tuner for his attribute after all! I dark tune my Junk Hermit with Doppelwarrior." Junk Hermit looked up slowly and smiled as each piece of armour fell apart, each surrendering two dark stars as he dissolved as the smile remained on his face. Doppelwarrior grimaced as the stars invaded his body but made no sound even when his frame simply exploded out and eight dark orbs rotated in the air in their place. "Gathering stars collapse and fade! Become the one true constant in this universe!" Yusei chanted on instinct and through loop memories as dark energy gathered among the orbs and exploded outward. "Dark Synchro Summon! Behold the might of the Dark Matter Dragon!" (2500/2000)

It truly was a sight to behold. For all the destructive tendencies of the Dark Signers, Dark Matter Dragon seemed oddly serene. It seemed akin to Stardust Dragon but with the horn divided into three, its wings seeming tattered and its scales gone from a heroic white and blue to a dark black and purple. The chest of the dark dragon was a single black jewel that seemed to contain a black hole within it. "And when my Dark Matter Dragon hits the field, I can destroy all your spell and trap cards!" Yusei added. "Go, Black Hole Stream!" What Yusei hadn't expected as he called out the effect name (again based on loop memories) was for the dragon to fly its way over to Pace's side of the field and simply look at the spell and traps. Then it opened its mouth and Yusei could feel the suction from his position, the three spells and traps being sucked into Dark Matter Dragon's maw, which it simply closed.

"M-Mah cards! Where are the cards?" Pace cried out.

Yusei chuckled darkly. "So now you care about something, Pace? Or are you simply scared that my monster might eat you as well?" he asked. Normally he wouldn't be planning this move so fast, but this version of Hunter Pace angered him. Someone cruel enough to prey on the weak. Someone who had no mercy. Someone who didn't deserve it in return.

From a nearby hill she watched. Sitting aboard a more regal like Duel Runner, bronze in colour, three-wheeled and armed with a forward-facing canon, she watched the duel go on. Her body was concealed by a white robe and a single metal patch over her right eye. It opened up, revealing a robotic replacement as Luna watched on the projected screens on her futuristic Duel Runner as Yusei and Hunter Pace raced around. She had Awoken a few weeks ago to find herself on an operating table. She had to be sedated as she screamed and tried to run away from the Ylliaster staff there. If only it were so easy.

It was while she had been under that the memories had hit. Yusei didn't survive his battle against Roman... In fact; he had plunged into the Ener-D reactor. And he had been brought back as a Dark Signer, one for an Immortal that had never existed in the original timeline. At the same time, after Carly's duel Jack had just vanished with his Duel Runner. From there it all fell apart. She and Leo still won the duel against Devak, but Akiza had gone completely off the deep end with grief. She had beaten Misty, but when Sayer had gone to use her again, Yusei had arrived and... She didn't even want to think about what Yusei had done to Sayer. Crow showed up, but by that point Akiza and Yusei had sped off, Akiza willingly giving herself over to the darkness to be with Yusei.

Jack still had the wings, but Crow got the Tail and Trudge, who often substituted for one of them in this situation, gained Akiza's claw. She had the other... and it was with a heavy heart they had approached Rex. The ceremony had been different, the King of the Underworld

summoned before them... but as Rex went to use the full dragon mark, it vanished. Yusei and Akiza had shown up, but they hadn't done anything. And then the sky turned red as Red Nova surged out from the King of the Underworld. Rex summoned his Earthbound Immortal, opposing Yusei and Akiza while at the same time fighting off Power Tool Dragon, Ancient Fairy Dragon, and various Blackwings. Then with a powerful roar the Crimson Dragon had appeared before them. The last thing she remembered was a roar as Trudge leapt to shield her and Leo... and pain, intense pain. And then... blackness.

"Because I used it in any sort of synchro summon, my Doppelwarrior's Effect activates!" Yusei declared. "Now I get to summon two Doppel Tokens to the field in attack mode!" Alongside the deathly dragon two small, almost imp-like, copies of Doppelwarrior appeared next to it, holding out their guns in an attempt to look menacing.

"Still ain't enough to beat any of mah monsters, Yusei!" Hunter Pace pointed out with a slight smirk on his face... but then he paled. Yusei's look of barely contained fury was still etched on his face, unchanged. Pace's eyes widened as he narrowly turned down a straight and his stomach dropped. "Y... You haven't normal summoned this turn!"

A grim smile appeared on Yusei's face. "Exactly. There is one monster all true Dark Signers are known for, after all... and for me it's a card I only use on those who deserve it, on those who dare to harm the innocent. On those who dare to threaten the lives of those still around!"

Luna smiled a little as she heard that. Yusei was finally Awake. The other Yusei had been rather depressing as he spoke of a doomed world and survival, being the reaper of the highways and so on, which she had only found out later on. After all, after she Awoke she

had been approached not by someone from Ylliaster exactly... but by some people she had never expected to see.

"You survived. Good. You got lucky." A younger voice, one she recognizes immediately.

"L... Lucky?"

"You were right in the middle of a clash between at least three big monsters. You're lucky we saved what we could." A second voice, older but also recognizable.

"I'm picking up some strange readings actually..." The first voice again. It's so hard to see them. "Take a look."

Silence. "Ah, I see. So we aren't the only ones with access to time travel, are we?" The second voice now. She's sweating but she can barely feel her legs and can barely see. There's no point in lying.

"... I'm not exactly in a position to lie then. It's good to see you two... Should I use the names, or is Aporia okay?"

Luna shook her head as she shook herself out of the flashback. It ended up that at the time of the clash Aporia, Antinomy, and Paradox had been travelling back to the past. A past they were now stranded in. They had told her what had happened, how the conflicting energies of Dark Signers, of Signers and of Burning Soul had been too much for all three creatures. A massive explosion of energy had burst out. Yusei and Akiza managed to use their Immortals and their undead nature to escape most of the damage (trashing Yusei's Duel Runner in the process according to Antinomy). Rex had nothing left of him but atoms on the wind from being pretty much at the center of it. And of the others in the group? She was the only one to survive. Ancient Fairy Dragon had appeared but had sacrificed herself to lessen the blow of the explosion. Even Paradox had tried reviving the dragon as a Malefic Monster, to give Luna some comfort... but nothing. Despite this Trudge and Crow still perished from it all, the energy that had been so freshly there forced through their bodies.

Leo had lasted a little longer, enough to keep her hanging on. Eventually he succumbed to his wounds too, but only after threatening the five to make sure Luna got to safety.

It hadn't been an easy process to save her either. The backlash of energy meant that while she had the blessing of holding all but one of the five signer marks (even if her own still felt cold), she also happened to need cybernetic reconstruction on quite a few parts of her body, including one of her eyes. They never let her be alone for too long, though, when she woke up. Lester especially... perhaps it was something he realized as Aporia. The pain of losing family so young, in blaming yourself for it. She hadn't asked and didn't want to push it.

She held up a card slowly and looked at it. Meklord Emperor Granel. Jakob's prized card... and he had given it to her. They were to go out and do what Yusei and Akiza had been doing: to find survivors, to help them rebuild. The energy wave had caused major damage in spiritual sites the world over... It was more akin to a wasteland at this point. She wasn't even sure if the three Nordic Duellists had survived. Eventually she sighed as she placed the card down, the whine of an approaching Duel Runner dying down. "It's starting," she simply said.

"Now I release my two Doppel Tokens!" Yusei declared, the two tokens blinking as they turned into sickly energy orbs and rose into the air. The sky seemed to pulse as they did and the flames grew higher. A stone heart, beating with barely contained malice, manifested in the skies above them.

Hunter Pace laughed. "Oh, this is rich. You, big, scary Dark Signer, are gonna make me pay... and you're gonna sacrifice all these people you were protecting!" he accused. He then shrunk back as Yusei smirked again

"Normally my Earthbound Immortal does require a sacrifice," Yusei agreed. His head turned towards the stone heart. "My Immortal! I

beseech you! I request for you not to feed on the souls before you that are innocent of any wrongdoing this day, but instead I offer before you this bandit's gang of men, the guilty and criminals for you to feast on. Show them why you are the hand of justice!" At first nothing happened, aside from the stone heart slowing its beating... and then suddenly increasing. Hunter Pace paled as he heard all-too-familiar screams... not those of victims, but of his bandits as their essence was pulled out. His gang was a pretty impressive one, about twenty of them. And all twenty were now gone, absorbed into the stone heart which began to pulse and beat harder and faster... before it exploded outwards. "Arise, the mighty lord of justice and the hand of fate! Earthbound Immortal Manos!" (1500/3000) Yusei declared as his mark glowed even brighter.

Blackness lined with white was all that seemed to slowly rise out from the geoglyph, swelling as it grew bigger and bigger. The darkness started to take on a shape. A mass of hands attached to willowy tendrils, each hand having a single eye on them. All of them looked toward Hunter Pace and watched as he rode around the fiery circuit. Unearthly silence was all that met him as the eyes silently judged the man.

"Y-Your monster's still too weak, and my monsters are still too strong. You've lost, Yusei!" Pace stammered out.

Yusei shook his head slowly. "No, I just won. I activate the effect of Manos. It can drain all the attack points of one of my monsters and add them to its own until either Manos attacks, or my next turn begins," Yusei explained as the Earthbound Immortal reached out and grabbed Dark Matter Dragon, a haze of energy being sucked out of the Dark Synchro monster. (1500/3000 - 4000/3000.)

Pace sweated. "W-wait, can't we talk about this? Make a bargain? Something!"

"Disappear. Manos! Drag him to the depths of the Underworld!" Yusei declared coldly. Manos' many hands surged forward. Even as the two Skull Flames moved to protect their master, they found

themselves grabbed by two of Manos' hands. Pace dodged and weaved as the gigantic hands that formed Manos reached out to grab him... only for two to reach out at once, grabbing him and his Duel Runner. Slowly the hands pulled back... and back and back, one letting go of Dark Matter Dragon as the hands sank into the ground. For a moment all that could be heard was Hunter Pace's screaming and the desperate revs of his Duel Runner. Then, as they sank into the ground and the geoglyph faded... all was silence. Yusei shivered. He never liked killing someone off... but there was a reason Pace had been challenged before he had Awoken. He sighed as he slowly rode back to the village.

"Kinda creepy how intense he can get, huh, Jack?" Luna asked. A slight frown was on her face... but she sighed. "No, let's rephrase that... it's completely terrifying."

Jack didn't respond. He was on the Wheel of Fortune and surrounded in a haze of flame. He had taken the loop to try and see if he could bind Red Nova to his will during the Dark Signer time. He didn't know that Yusei and Akiza had also been turned. He didn't know that Luna was the only one focusing on the Crimson Dragon at all. And yet... and yet he blamed himself for it. "Luna... I'm sorry."

Luna sighed. She saw this coming. "Jack, don't. You had your reasons... and in the end, this Runner and this card might just make up for all that," she admitted. "Heck... I might even have a way for us to get Paradox more stable if he loops again."

"But it's my fault. Leo died because I was an idiot."

"And you didn't mean to, Jack. It was an accident," Luna insisted. She sighed again. "I don't blame you for doing what you did. I don't blame Yusei for killing Hunter Pace so easily. This is... a darker loop. It was always going to be darker. We just need to work to make the most of it."

Jack slowly allowed himself to smile, but said no more. He turned and simply drove off on his Runner. And Luna? Luna allowed herself to smile for the first time in a long time in this loop, without having it forced. It might be scary... but she was one of the oldest loopers of the branch after Jack and Yusei. It was not addressed all that often as she liked to hang around in the background. And yet, any loop that she got to spend time with her friends, to make new friends... to even heal over old scars was a good loop in her eyes.

It wouldn't be until she got back to base later that Luna would notice the number 49 singed on the back of her cybernetic right hand.

9.3. (wildrook)

Jaden and Yusei were amazed.

For one, their timelines coincided in this variant, which meant Duel Academy had Turbo Dueling courses.

"Well," Jaden said, "no time like the present. Might as well see if there are any Speed Spell Cards."

"Yeah, most of your decks are good for Ground Dueling," Yusei replied. "That and I've been looping with two different versions of Stardust Dragon for quite some time."

"You two," Yubel said, "I'd hate to be the odd one out, but I think your friend's girlfriend might be teaching Alexis how to ride that thing."

Jaden was surprised, as was Yusei, who cleared his throat.

"Since when was Akiza my girlfriend?" he asked Yubel.

"Since the time you saved her life, I think."

"We'll discuss this later," Jaden replied. "Last time I used a normal motorcycle, it fell in the bay. I'm not making that mistake this time."

"Riiiiiight..." Yusei replied. "Oh, by the way, there's a Duel Dragon that's basically fusion-based, so that might be up your alley, you two."

"We'll check that out later," Jaden said. "Still, can't believe there's a bigger island for this... How much land did Kaiba add on?"

"Enough to hire different teachers for this kind of stuff," a Brooklyn accent replied, showing Joey Wheeler in a helmet. "And believe it or not, I DID get hired by Kaiba. He must have felt a bit Loopy."

Jaden then chuckled. "Nice to see you again, Joey," he said.

Yusei nodded. "Never got to meet you during my baseline, but there WAS a look-alike in there," he said.

"Must be referring to Jesse Wheeler," Joey sighed.

9.4. (KR-Nexus) (Fused loop with Xiaolin Showdown)

Jack the Monarch

Jack Spicer, EVIL GENIUS, was relatively young by looping standards but he was not alien to strange things happening to him (becoming a talking cactus being one of them).

So he was honestly surprised when he Awoke as a hulking armored-iceman (or was the armor a part of him?!). At least the cape was cool.

Capes are cool.

This is when the memories came in.

"So, my name is Spicer, Monarch of Frost and all things Icy," thought Jack as he looked around. He was in a throne room made of ice, guarded by knights fully armored with ice weapons, shields, etc., and let's not forget the beautiful maids in blue with spiky ears that reminded Jack of elves.

"Not bad at all. I got a castle, an army, a full treasury, maids and others that do anything I ask them to do, a KINGDOM!" thought Jack with glee before his smile turned into an evil smirk (hidden by his mask). "But best of all are my new Ice Powers, I can't wait to see Cheese Head's expression when I kick his round butt around with his own element."

Because there is nothing better that kicking the butts of your enemies with what they are best at.

9.5. (CrossoverpairingLover) (Fused with Code Geass)

Britannia in its many loops had been known for some crazy reasons behind invading countries, but this loop might have just taken the cake for Lelouch Lamperouge (who would prefer not to use vi Britannia as much after his baseline.).

The dark-haired, violet-eyed former prince felt a headache coming on as his loop memories came to him in full.

Apparently, Britannia had invaded Japan...for a card game.

For specific mechanics of the card game, no less.

Thousands of lives lost, cultural landmarks destroyed, the very name Japan stolen (replaced with Area 11), for Fusion, Synchro, and Xyz monsters (which were apparently the replacement for Sakuradite).

Hell, the entire war was fought with that damn card game instead of actual weapons, with the Knightmare frame being replaced with

something called "Pendulum Monsters".

It was enough plain stupidity to make him want to bash his head against a wall!

Sure, he had encountered the card game before, and did in fact like it. But this, this was too much!

He almost didn't want to rescue C.C. this loop, simply because he wasn't sure what would apparently replace Geass (the ability to draw any card you wanted, perhaps?).

But, seeing as it amused him to no end to continuously stop Britannia (he was still trying towards that perfect, no civilian casualty run he so desperately wanted to pull off at least once), he was going to save his immortal witch once again.

Though hopefully there were some other loopers around who actually cared for this overly important card game. He'd ping them, but that might distract them in their high stakes card games.

"You know, just when I think the Satellite is the pits, we get a loop like this," Yusei Fudo, leader of a freedom fighter band this loop, snarked to his looping comrades as his Turret Warrior opened fire on an enemy's El Shaddoll Winda.

"Yeah, we don't even have our extra decks to start the loop off, what a pain," Jaden Yuki complained as he narrowly used Negate Attack to block an attack on his Wildheart from his attacker's legion of Burning Abyss monsters. "Well, except for Akiza's lookalike".

"Speak for yourself; some of us don't need a damn Extra Deck!" Joey Wheeler boasted as his Red Eyes Black Dragon struck a soldier directly, winning the duel rather handily (and sucking the poor smuck into what looked like the shadow realm).

"Well, one Black Rose Dragon isn't going to take down the empire, or stop this massacre" Kite noted seriously as his Photon Crusher and Thrasher were mowed down by a pair of Qliphorts.

"Find the girl. I don't care how many soldiers we lose! The card within her is too precious to me to escape! I, Clovis la Britannia command you to out-duel those pitiful Number terrorists..."

"Kneel and await my further command!"

The command resonated through the command center, currently filled to the brim with not only the blond viceroy of Area 11, but also his personal guard, all of whom were now kneeling, to the confusion of the unaffected Clovis.

"Who are you!? What are you doing to my men, and why are you dressed like a bad cartoon villain!" Clovis stared in fury at the dark figure who strolled into his central command like he owned the place. His cape dramatically billowed behind him, his helmet hide his face behind one way glass, and, if Clovis' ears were working right, the glass had just retracted a bit before that command was given, as if to expose an eye.

"Better a cartoon villain, than real world tyrant!" the figure replied ominously. "This would normally be when I try to reason with you, maybe appeal to your humanity, seeing as Nunnally believes, and has been proven right, that you can be made an ally, but I have no reason to keep you alive. Not after ordering countless people to die, over a damn playing card!"

"But it has 3500 attack power, cannot be destroyed by battle or card effects, and grants its owner immortality," Clovis weakly muttered as the figure, really Lelouch in his Zero costume, twitched. "Wait, Nunnally..."

"Dispose of the Prince, then turn yourselves in." Lelouch waved the geassed guards off as they began to rise ominously and begin

shambling towards Clovis like something out of a zombie movie. "Oh, and make him call a cease fire before he dies while you're at it."

All of this death, for a card game?

It was loops like this that made him drink, and no prohibitionist crack squad of Shirley's was going to stop him.

Once the battle ended, he would go check on the status of loopers. If there was even a single looper who liked deciding the fate of everyone on drawing cards, he was dumping this loop's fate on him and taking a damn vacation loop.

While they weren't able to get to their vast quantities of cards in their subspace pockets, they still had access to their loop-based abilities.

With that, it wasn't hard for them to break into this "Britannian" compound, in which the eight of them now stood: Yusei, Jaden, Joey, Kite, Alexis, Crow, Alito, and a non-awake girl named Kallen who greatly resembled Akiza (and even had the Black Rose Dragon card).

Before them was a treasure trove of cards, thousands of them. Monsters, Spells, Traps, cards of all varieties were in here.

The anchor of this reality, Lelouch, had passed on a message earlier via a green-haired girl named C.C. (This loop's all yours, just keep me and the following people out of it, plus a list that included Kallen with a note about letting her fight, but promising anger if they let her die. That, and something about keeping a girl named Nina from inventing some doomsday card.) He had given them the task of stopping these "Britannians" this loop, and to leave himself and fellow awake looper C.C. alone for now on (C.C. then stole his pizza and ran off into the sunset, giggling like a school girl).

While Yusei would have preferred him to have offered up help, he recognized that some people got annoyed at loops when they found

their life and death scenarios replaced by card games.

But the intel on this compound was well worth it.

Picking up a pair of old friends in the form of Junk Synchron and Stardust Dragon, Yusei felt the powers of the world tremble in anticipation for the conflict ahead.

9.6. (Drakohahn) (Fused with Gundam SEED)

Kira Yamato Awoke in his usual place, a gazebo where he was working with his...wait. What kind of variant was this? Instead of his laptop in front of him with news of the war, there was a large pile of strange cards with brown and black backs. The violet-eyed Anchor hoped his loop memories would kick in soon, before Tolle and Miri came along. In the moments of waiting, he sent out a ping. He got two back, one of which was within spitting distance. In other words, it was Miriallia who was just about to step into his line of sight.

As the most recent looper of his Branch approached with her non-looper boyfriend, the memories hit him. Things were...odd, to say the least. Around the time the Coordinator process was starting to see wide spread use, one Dr. Fudo introduced an experimental power plant and engine based on a new type of particle he had discovered, which he called Yusei Ryushi, or Planetary Particles. As this experimental source of power proved cleaner and more efficient than the prolific nuclear fission plants, there was a wide spread adoption of the new energy called Momentum. There were plenty of people who wanted to call it something else, but Ener-D just sounded silly.

Anyway, it was soon after this discovery that another was made, Momentum's connection to Dueling. Because of this, when the engines were put into vehicles for mass production, dueling platforms were added as well. Now, this was all fine and dandy, but then the Bloody Valentine incident occurred. A nuclear missile was used to destroy Junius 7, an agricultural PLANT that was populated

almost entirely by civilians. Well over two hundred thousand deaths resulted from that. In response, the military arm of the PLANTs, ZAFT, seeded Earth with hundreds if not thousands of Neutron Jammers, a device that generates a field which prevents nuclear fission. This didn't cause nearly as big an issue in this variant as in baseline, as the countries that had already switched to Momentum power weren't affected and thus lent swift aid to the places that still used nuclear power until they had completed their own Momentum reactors.

Now, when it came to ZAFT's invasion...Kira felt conflicted on this...due to the normal batteries being replaced by Momentum engines, Mobile Suits and Armors had near limitless power...and were dueling platforms as well. So, instead of massive battles where everyone was trying to destroy the opposing Mobile Weapons...they engaged in some kind of team vs. team battle royale. From what he could tell from the news feeds he saw, the objective was to essentially render the opponent motionless by triggering the engine shutdown when the life point gauge reached zero. Sounded kind of roundabout to Kira, but whatever. Not the first oddly designed variant he'd been in, nor would it be the last.

Then there was the last part of the change: one of his baseline friends had been replaced. Again, not the first time it had happened and it wouldn't be the last. His friend, Kuzzey Buskirk, was replaced by one Yusei Fudo. Yes, son of Dr. Fudo, who apparently named him after the particle he had discovered. Was he the other ping? Well, Kira was going to find out soon enough.

The Awake Kira and Miriallia entered the room in the college where they and their unawake friends usually worked on an exoframe suit. However, in this fused loop, the powered suit had been replaced by a Duel Runner. It was red with white decals in a few places, with the back curved like a C over where the rider would sit. Instead of being placed at the traditional place, the handle bars were connected to the back by movable arms.

And then there was the main person working on it. He was fairly tall, though not towering over Kira and his friends. His eyes were a calm blue while he had some kind of gold tattoo thing under his left eye. The strangest thing about him was his hair, mostly black with spiky bangs over his face and down behind his head...and three almost blade-like protrusions on either side of his head with the two on top having dull yellow front edges. Finally, he was dressed in blue jeans, light brown boots, a blue jacket, and a black shirt with some odd red symbol on the front.

This man was Yusei Fudo, the person who had replaced Kira's friend Kuzzey for the loop. When Kira entered, Yusei looked up from where he was working on the Duel Runner. The pair locked eyes for an instant, sizing each other up as they seemed to confirm to each other that they were looping, in a gaze that lasted a single second. Because they did it just with a glance, no one else noticed, not even the Awake Miriallia, who had been behind Kira at the door so she didn't see the exchange.

Playing the baseline, Kira looked over at his unawake sister, Cagalli.

"Who's that?"

"A guest of Professor Kato's." It was Yusei that had spoken up for that. Usually, it was Sai who said that. Kira shrugged it off as an unimportant detail.

"Well, we've still got some work to do on the Duel Runner." Tolle Koenig addressed everyone who had been working on it for the past weeks. "If there's no big problems today, we can finish this project up by dinner!"

The Loopers looked at each other. Yusei got some slight visual cues from Kira and Miriallia that basically stated that the Duel Runner wasn't going to be finished by dinner.

Some time later, the college shook from numerous explosions rocking Heliopolis. The non-loopers immediately ran out the door, while Kira, Miri, and Yusei quickly debated among themselves who got the nearly complete vehicle. Well, Yusei not so much, as he pointed out that he already had a few dozen of his Duel Runner, which the bunch of friends had been making in place of their exosuit this loop. Kira ended up getting it, since it turned out that Miriallia didn't have the space to fit the whole thing in her Subspace Pocket.

Anyway, they all caught up with their friends shortly after that. Kira's unawake sister then ran off like in normal baseline. Kira then ran after her while Miri whispered to Yusei that they'd meet up again later. Just like in baseline, the siblings found the new Earth Alliance G-weapon Mobile Suits that ZAFT was currently trying to hijack. She started crying about how her father betrayed her, and then Kira took her over to the closest emergency shelter that only had one remaining spot. So Cagalli was taken in.

Now it was time for Kira to take the pilot seat of the Strike once more. He rushed back to where Murrue Ramius, the future captain of the warship Archangel, was shooting at the encroaching ZAFT soldiers, trying to protect the remaining G-weapons from them. She called him down; he jumped the railing and landed on the Strike. One ZAFT soldier in a red pilot suit ran out of bullets, so he dropped his gun, pulled out a knife, and rushed into melee range. As in baseline, it was Kira's childhood friend, Athrun.

Discovering his friend Kira was there, Athrun paused. Murrue then drove him off with her backup pistol before pushing Kira into the cockpit of the Strike before getting in herself. After all, it was technically the safest place for them at that moment. So, since they had to get out of there, she booted the Mobile Suit up and made it stand. However, there was apparently a bit more to this process than normal. In addition to the usual startup sequence, she pulled a deck from a concealed holster in the cockpit console. After that, the currently Lieutenant Murrue slid the deck into the auto-shuffler that served as the Main Deck zone.

With that complete, the Strike finished booting up. Murrue took hold of the control levers and made the Mobile Suit move. Outside the cockpit, explosions from the attacking ZAFT MS silhouetted the Strike in flames. Time for action!

9.7.

Yugi sat back as the group, all six of them, leaned back and relaxed in the... well, private jet Kaiba had managed to call to Duelist Kingdom. All of them were Awake and Mokuba was sleeping soundly in his chair. "So, Joey, going to use your winnings again on Serenity?" Yugi asked.

"Wait a second. The winnings are three million dollars," Kaiba pointed out.

Joey raised an eyebrow. "Your point, rich boy?" he questioned.

"How do you spend three million dollars on her?"

Silence engulfed the room. "Y'know, now that I think about it, it doesn't take that much for laser eye surgery, or no one would get it," Tristan noted.

Realization started to dawn on the others faces... and Joey started to shake in his seat. "Joey... you did double check the costs didn't you?" Ryou asked.

"Given his, despite the looping, consistently bad marks in math? I'd say no." Tea sighed.

"Oh boy... hit the deck!" Tristan shouted, the looper recognizing when his long time friend was about to explode in anger... with only Yugi and Kaiba noticing it sooner.

One curse-filled portion of the flight later, Joey seethed. "When I get my hands on those bloodsucking doctors..."

"If it makes you feel better, mutt, I'll assist," Kaiba grumbled. While he would still insist that they weren't friends, he still liked to look out for the other loopers when they were being financially manipulated.

9.8. (Mattman324)

Atem sat in a room with his fellow Loopers, a smug look adorning his face. Most of the loopers looked reasonably happy... except for Seto Kaiba, who was scowling. The tension in the room was thick, and no one seemed to want to be the first to speak.

Finally, Joey did what he did best—pushing his luck. "So, Kaiba, how's it feel to have the worst monsters?"

Kaiba glared at him. "Shut up, Joey."

Joey's grin widened. "Oh? But, Kaiba, I'm *sure* after all these loops of talking about how your monsters are the greatest, it was a *thrilling* experience to finally know what it's like to have the worst monsters."

Kaiba's glare intensified. Joey continued. "I mean, look at your monsters! Saggi and Lord of D. weren't useless, admittedly, but Rabid Horseman was worse than its components, Hitotsu-me Giant was below average for Warriors, Judge Man was *absolutely terrible* , Ryu-Kishin Powered was pretty bad, and that's not getting started on your treasured dragons!"

Kaiba grumbled at this, remembering the terrible nature of most of the dragons in the game they had just been in. All of them were high in stats *except* the ones that mattered, with only a few being good—that did include Thunder Dragon, but he rarely used Thunder Dragon anyway. "That includes your Red Eyes, though. And be that as it

may, Joey, my Blue Eyes Ultimate Dragon can still easily beat any of your monsters."

Joey laughed. "I don't think so! You might if I was using solo Red Eyes, Baby Dragon, and Time Wizard, but I have Panther Warrior and Red Eyes Black Metal, and both of those are absolutely amazing!"

Atem rolled his eyes, and unseen by everyone else so did Yugi. Unstated was the fact that neither of them came even close to some of the mad power he wielded—Dark Magician 1 and 2, Dark Magician Girl, Kuriboh, Magician of Black Chaos, Black Luster Soldier... He had many good monsters. "This 'Kingdom' Loop was a rather fun diversion. I hope we get it more often, like those Reshef Loops," Atem thought to himself.

Yugi added to this. "Yeah, this and that 'Rose Duelist' Loop were pretty good. Though the fact that we've been seeing this DarkNite, or Nitemare, or Manawydan fab Llyr in these Loops can't be a good thing."

9.9. (OathToOblivion) (Fused with Doctor Who.)

"Kite, why exactly are we doing this?"

"Simple, Doctor. I run a Galaxy/Photon deck, and you're looking to run one yourself. Of course I want to see how we stack up," Kite Tenjo, Number Hunter extraordinaire, shrugged.

"Well, in this regeneration anyway. All my other selves are planning to run their own Decks," the Doctor, currently a 14-year-old version of his Warrior incarnation, stated. He had been interested in the card game that was known to its home as Duel Monsters, and everywhere else as Yu-Gi-Oh! for a while now, ever since he was introduced to it by Yugi himself. Of course, like most things about him, the interests of each of his incarnations were vastly different,

and they all were planning to run different decks. As for himself, he was looking to run a Galaxy/Photon deck.

So when he found himself in Heartland City, what else could he do? "That still doesn't explain why we need to duel. Can't I just run through my strategies with you?" the Doctor protested.

Kite shook his head. "It's easier to test strategies and devise counters to their counters when you're in an actual duel. A dry run, if you will," he explained. "Only," he realized as something struck him, "your Extra Deck has Numbers, right? Be careful with them," he advised.

"Not to worry, Yugi told me about that problem. All my cards came from the Hub," the Doctor reassured him.

Kite still wasn't convinced though. "Well, be careful anyway. Sometimes the in-Loop Numbers don't interact well with out-of-Loop ones, and I know for a fact that you have the Galaxy-Eyes Numbers in there," Kite warned him.

"I'll be careful, don't worry," the currently-not-a-Time-Lord Anchor stated, waving his hand to brush aside Kite's concern. Kite pursed his lips. Having heard the exact same thing from Yuma many times, he knew full well that sooner or later something would happen. What was it about Anchors disregarding their safety anyway?

"Alright then. Luckily, we're in the middle of nowhere, so we can get away with Solid Vision," Kite said, activating his Duel Disk. The Doctor did the same, using a Battle City model that looked like it had parts that had been repaired with hobbled together pieces of Duel Academy Disks, modern-styled Disks, and even Disks from Yuya's section of the Loop.

"8000 a piece?" the Doctor questioned. Kite thought it over for a sec, before nodding his agreement.

"Alright then," he said slowly as the two of them drew their hands.

"DUEL!"

9.10. (TrueZero2) (Fused with Shaman King)

"The second match of the Duelist Kingdom Semi-Finals will now begin! Duelists, take your positions!"

As Bandit Keith took his place at one end of the duel field, his opponent took his place at the other.

"Hey, kid. Does your mommy know that you're here?" Keith said, a mocking grin plastered on his face.

"Yeah, yeah, get the jokes out now; you won't be smiling for long." Keith's opponent, guest Looper Yoh Asakura said with a smile, "You know, after you and your guys trapped me and my friends in that cave, I was able to get ten Star Chips on the way out. Thanks for that. This time though, I'm getting to fight you properly, so I'm really looking forward to this."

"Well, ya better take that experience from fightin' Bonz in the cave and throw it out the window." Keith grinned. "After all, last time I powered up his deck. This time though? You're facing mine, and it blows his outta the water!"

"Well, you see, there's the thing," Yoh replied. "Back then, I had to duel using a friend's deck since your boys blindsided me while my group was getting some safe practice in. You know how most duellists give their deck a dry run from time to time?"

"Yeah, what about it?" Keith asked.

"Me and my friend, who's right over there," Yoh said, pointing at Ryou Bakura who was up in the gallery. "We'd swapped decks so I could see where any holes were from the opponent's perspective. So in effect, neither of us used our real decks back then. This time,

though, I'm using my cards, and I'm going to use them to wipe that grin off your face and knock you out of the tournament!"

"Oh really?" Keith said. "We'll just have to see about that, kid."

"Are both duellists ready?" Pegasus' aide, Croquet asked. After receiving confirmation from both sides, he gave the signal. "Semi Final Battle 2, Bandit Keith Vs Yoh Asakura, begin!"

"DUEL!"

Yoh: 2000LP

Keith: 2000LP

"I'll start things off," Yoh said, drawing a card. "I'll set one monster and I'll then put two cards face-down. Your turn."

"You talked big and that's your opening move?!" Keith laughed. "I'll show you how it's really done! I summon Pendulum Machine in Attack Mode!"

Pendulum Machine: 1750ATK

"Wipe out that weak face-down monster!" Keith shouted.

"Not so fast! I activate a trap card!" Yoh said, revealing one of his cards. "Ghostrick Scare! When I use this card, I can take any number of face-down monsters I control and flip them so that they're face-up. For each Ghostrick monster that I reveal, I can take one of your monsters and change it to face-down Defense Mode!"

"What?!" Keith said, shocked.

"I flip one monster so it's face up," Yoh said. "Come out, Ghostrick Jiangshi! Since I revealed a Ghostrick monster, I'll drop Pendulum Machine into face-down Defense Mode!"

As soon as the words left Yoh's mouth, Pendulum Machine began glowing before disappearing from the field before it could hit Jiangshi. The only reminder that it was still there was the glowing monster zone on Keith's field.

Ghostrick Jiangshi: 1800DEF

"That's not all, though. Since Jiangshi was flipped face up, I can add one Ghostrick monster to my hand, so long as its level isn't higher than the total number of Ghostricks I control. Since I only have the one, I'll put the level one Ghostrick Lantern in my hand! With that, I'm done. You can continue."

"Stinkin' little brat," Keith muttered under his breath as he placed a card face-down. "I put one card face down and end my turn."

"Alright then, my turn," Yoh said, drawing a card. "Since I have a Ghostrick monster that's already face-up, I'll summon Ghostrick Nekomusume in Attack Mode."

Ghostrick Nekomusume: 400ATK

"What's with all the wimpy monsters?" Keith asked, clearly annoyed at what he was fighting.

"Hey, don't get all bent out of shape because my monsters aren't very strong. It's her effect that you've got to worry about," Yoh said, grinning. "You see, when Nekomusume's on the field, you can't flip summon monsters! So whenever I get your monsters to flip face down, you can't flip them face up again!"

"Sonuva…" Keith snarled.

"Then I'll active Jiangshi's second effect, allowing me to flip him so that he's face down again. I'll then end my turn by playing one card face-down," Yoh said. "So, Keith, what was that about blowing me outta the water?"

"…I'm gonna destroy you, kid. My turn!" Keith growled, drawing a card. "I may not be able to use Pendulum Machine, but that doesn't mean I'm done! I summon Launcher Spider!"

The new monster, a mechanical spider with missile pods on its back, appeared on the field.

Launcher Spider: 2200ATK

"Attack that puny cat girl!" Keith shouted as Launcher Spider began firing out several missiles.

"I activate a Trap Card!" Yoh declared. "Ghostrick-Go-Round!"

The missiles that were flying towards Nekomusume exploded before they could reach her.

"What now?!" Keith growled.

"Ghostrick-Go-Round lets me flip a face-down monster so that it's face up. If it's a Ghostrick monster, then I can take one of your face-up monsters and flip it face down. Since my only face-down monster is Jiangshi…" Yoh explained, flipping his monster face up, "that means I can flip yours face down again!"

Like with Pendulum Machine, Launcher Spider began glowing for a moment before disappearing.

"I really hate this damn kid…" Keith muttered as Yoh used Jiangshi's effect to add Ghostrick Doll to his hand.

The duel had continued much the same way for another couple of rounds, albeit with Keith being much more careful when Yoh had a face-down monster in play. Although he had managed to summon Machine King and Slot Machine, Yoh's deck had managed to force them face down as well.

Bandit Keith: 2000LP

(Face-Down) Machine King: 2000DEF

(Face-Down) Slot Machine: 2300DEF

(Face-Down) Pendulum Machine: 2000DEF

(Face-Down) Launcher Spider: 2500DEF

No spells and traps.

Yoh meanwhile had maintained his defensive edge. Despite this, he hadn't been able to deal any damage. To his benefit though, Keith hadn't been able to touch him, and he had managed to get a few more cards of his own out on the field.

Yoh Asakura: 2000LP

(Face-Down) Ghostrick Jiangshi: 1800DEF

(Attack Mode) Ghostrick Nekomusume: 400ATK

(Face-Down) Ghostrick Doll: 1200DEF

(Face-Down) Ghostrick Yeti: 2000DEF

Ghostrick-Go-Round

"Right then, my turn," Yoh said, drawing a card. "I'll flip summon Ghostrick Doll, Yeti, and Jiangshi!"

The three monsters appeared on the field.

"Yeti's effect lets me designate a monster on my field and make it unable to be destroyed by an effect. I choose to target Doll. Jiangshi's effect lets me, as always, add a Ghostrick to my hand. Since I have four Ghostricks out, I can choose any of the monsters in my deck so I'll go with Ghostrick Witch," Yoh said, running through his monsters' effects. "I'll then place a card face down and with that, I'll end my turn. At this point Doll's effect activates and with it, all

face-up monsters changed to face-down defense mode. Because four monsters had their positions changed this way, I can set Ghostrick Warwolf from my deck as well."

Watching the duel from the gallery, Yoh's four companions for this Loop watched.

"Why'd Yoh go and do that?" Tristan asked, his current panic clearly signaling that he was not Awake at the moment. "Nekomusume was the only thing stopping Keith from steamrolling him!"

"Don't worry, Tristan," Tea replied. "I'm sure he knows what he's doing. After all, he's been the one in control of this duel thus far."

"I'm just surprised that Keith's not been using spells or traps yet," Ryou said. "Do you think he's not been drawing any?"

"A guy like him probably cheats when he duels," Tristan muttered.

"Well, either way, we're about to find out," Yugi said. "He's about to take his turn."

"You really are an idiot kid. My turn!" Keith shouted, a wide grin plastered on his face. "Since you went and put that cat monster face down, I'll go and flip summon everything on my field, because I can, and I'll even throw in my Barrel Dragon for good measure!"

Machine King: 2200ATK

Slot Machine: 2000ATK

Pendulum Machine: 1750ATK

Launcher Spider: 2200ATK

Barrel Dragon: 2600ATK

"Not only that, but Machine King's effect activates! He gains 100 Attack Points for every machine monster on my side of the field!"

Machine King: 2200ATK - 2600ATK

"Well, it won't do you much good," Yoh said. "I activate the trap card, Needle Ceiling!"

"Can't I complete a move without you activating something?!" Keith yelled.

"Well, this wins me the duel, so yeah, I'm activating it," Yoh replied.

"Wait. What?" Keith asked, confused.

"Needle Ceiling can only be activated when there are four or more monsters on the field. Put simply, every face-up monster on the field is destroyed," Yoh explained, smiling. "Since all of my monsters are face down, you'll be the only one to lose any."

As if on cue, a large slab of stone appeared above the field, with several spikes pointing straight down.

"No. No!" Keith shouted, checking his hand for anything that could possibly save him, only to come up empty.

The slab hung in the air for a few seconds before slamming down on the field, destroying all of Keith's monsters in a large explosion. When the smoke had cleared and the ceiling had vanished, each of Yoh's monsters popped their heads out of their monster card zones, curious as to what had just happened.

"Also, according to the tournament rules: 'When a monster is destroyed through an effect, the controller of that card takes damage equal to half of that monster's Attack Points.' Since all of your monsters were destroyed through Needle Ceiling, it's pretty clear that you've lost. In fact, you lost enough Life Points to lose twice!"

Machine King: 2600ATK

Slot Machine: 2000ATK

Pendulum Machine: 1750ATK

Launcher Spider: 2200ATK

Barrel Dragon: 2600ATK

Total ATK: 11,150

Damage Inflicted: 5,575

Keith: 2000LP - 0LP

"The winner of this duel is Yoh Asakura. The final match of the playoffs between Yugi Muto and Yoh Asakura will be held in two hours," Croquet declared as Keith gathered his cards up and stormed off in frustration.

'Hmm, I guess he's not going to try and attack Pegasus this time,' Yugi thought.

'Seems that way,' Atem agreed.

"I'm gonna have fun this Loop," Yoh said, grinning.

9.11 (wildrook) (Fused with Loony Tunes)

In the desert, Daffy had Awakened with a gasp...as he looked in his surroundings, almost wondering how the heck he got here.

"Okay," he said. "Time to take a look around...robes, staff, and headband with amulet..." He was surprised. "Okay, I knew this fantasy would come back to haunt me... How'd I end up as a...no...THE Wizard?"

"Dahad!" a voice yelled, surprising Daffy out of his thoughts. Much to his surprise, there was a young man with spiky hair...and a puzzle on his person. "Are you...kidding me?"

"Excuse me?" Daffy asked him. "Wait...you're the local Anchor around here, aren't you?"

The young man nodded. "One of two, actually," he said. "Come on, you're going to need to be filled in. Right now, we're up against the forces of the Shadow Realm, and you're replacing my friend's mentor."

Daffy couldn't believe it. How'd he end up as an actual wizard?

Either way, he had no idea what he was getting into when he got drafted into the war against the Shadow Realm...as a tune had entered his head...

9.12 (Harosata) (Fused with Warcraft and Hearthstone)

Yugi and company had been tasked with retrieving Moira Bronzebeard, daughter of the King of Ironforge. To do so, they had to enter Blackrock Mountains, home of the Dark Iron Dwarfs and the Black Dragon Flight. The party managed to make their way into the depths when they stumbled into a bar, somehow interrupting a different kind of party. Worse, this was the time of the year that Coren Direbrew visited the bar. Thankfully, Coren was sober, so instead of a fight, Joey and Coren played a card game because Yugi was too scrawny by Dwarf standards, but not before Yugi gave Joey a legendary card.

"I didn't imagine you as a Hearthstone player." Joey looked down at his starting hand and traded two of them.

"Oh, I'm always playing Hearthstone. Heck, I always play Hearthstone every year!" Coren grinned at his hand. "Course, I enjoy a good mug before I play, and it always ends up with some axes in me and them. Don't know why though. Sometimes that Hearthstone board is closed."

"Right." Joey was not betting on this to be a Hearthstone Loop. "I play a Training Dummy and end my turn."

"Ha! A cardboard cutout dares challenge me? I'm playing mah Hero Power!" Coren banged his fist on his Hero Power. "Dogpile! I just drew both our minions from our decks, and I got a nice two-headed doggie! You just got a...Legendary...dragon. Shite."

Ysera frowned as she looked at the corehound across from her and up at the players. "Okay, Looping in as a card is strange."

Joey snorted as Coren meekly ended his turn. "Lady, you should Loop into Duelist Kingdom someday."

9.13. (Zerorock42) (Fused with To Kill a Mockingbird. Yes, really.)

Atticus Rhodes Awoke sitting at a desk, several legal documents in front of him.

Okie-Dokie. I seem to be a lawyer this time. Loop memories say my name is...

Atticus Finch?

It seemed that Yggdrasil was on another "name's the same" kick. It was a shame that Duel Monsters didn't come with him. Dueling would make "Mockingbird" less of a snorefest...

Atticus' thoughts were interrupted by the door behind him opening. Turning around he saw a little girl wearing overalls and looking at him confused. She said, "You ain't Atticus."

Oh dear. Scout was Awake.

"Now, hold on. I may not be your Pop but my name is Atticus. Now, have things been happening to you over and over again?"

Scout nodded.

sigh "Oh, boy. Now see, there's this tree called Yggdrasil..."

Loop notes:

9.1. I'd comment, but my Saw knowledge is non-existant

9.2. Yes, 49. Not 39. Also, this is one of my fave loops so far that I've written. This comes from an old idea concept of mind, when I first thought up Junk Hermit.

9.3. According to wildrook, also enough to make it its own continent.

9.4. Because if you didn't think he'd abuse those powers when he gets back... then you don't know Jack.

9.5. And probably ate that cake too. Side note, the use of Pendulums isn't an Arc-V crossover, but more a general fusion of Yugioh Elements. As will be shown next time with Yuya's first fused loop.

9.6. CARD GAMES IN MECHA!

9.7. Because for some reason 4Kids changed the cash prize in Duellist Kingdom from Yen to Dollars... but not the amount.

9.8. No comment beyond Nightmare being an interesting re-occurrence.

9.9. DOCTOR WHO. Starring: Sir John Hurt and Kite Tenjo. Stay tuned for Episode 2: Card Game of the Daleks. Airing whenever someone writes it.

9.10. Hoo boy. This one caused a minor argument when the author admitted they had planned to use Xyz monsters if it got to Pegasus.

9.11. Great, now I can't get that song out of my head.

9.12. I'm not sure what's funnier. Joey playing Hearthstone, or Yugi being scrawny by Dwarven standards.

9.13. Ygdrassil loves its puns and same name jokes.

Next Loopset: Loopset 10.

"The fun has only just begun!"

4 Loops.

Yuya

Yuto

Yuzu/Zuzu

Fus- "It's Yugo!"

Fused Loops.

Yugioh Arc-V.

Chapter 10

Yugioh Loops 10 (AKA Yu-gi-oh Arc-V! Loops.)

First, sorry for taking so long. To put it bluntly, uni snuck up on me and it's now over, so I've just been waiting for inspiration. In exchange, there is a deluxe version and, if possible, I will try for set 11 before the year is out.

This set is going to be a bit different. Four different looping snippets, we're not using the usual word limit, and we're not using numbers in the scheme.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Welcome to the show!

PROLOGUE

Thoth sighed as he slowly rubbed his temple... that is, his head. Although he'd usually be the first to elaborate on the verbosity and where the term came from, at the moment he had no such urge for one reason and one reason alone.

"The card games troubling you, Thoth?"

The ibis-headed god sighed... and as much as he would rather not, his curiosity demanded he looked at the speaker. He knew who it was, but much like the Shinto God Izanagi, certain other gods had gotten into the habit of cosplay. "Ra. I see you have simply gone for looking like the dragon today," Thoth noted.

And there Ra was, dressed as the Winged Dragon of Ra, no less. "Izanagi decided to tone down his costume so I didn't see the reason to continue looking like Phoenix mode... not that I couldn't have," Ra insisted, his deeper voice making it almost comical. "But... you're

avoiding my question, Thoth. What troubles you? I rarely see you this troubled with other situations, is all. So what troubles you with those who have quite excellent choice in art?"

Thoth rolled his eyes... but couldn't help but let out a slight chuckle at the last comment. In truth, while he looked over the loops of Duel Monsters, on occasion he'd find himself swamped with issues that cropped up... which was when he'd find offers of assistance from many other gods who showed fondness for the games. Ra was one, but Osiris, Geb (most likely identifying with Obelisk the Tormentor), Anubis, and Horus from his own Pantheon would offer to take over for a loop or two if they could spare the extra workload. Even the likes of Loki, Thor, and Odin of the Norse Pantheon had suddenly shown interest once he had gotten the branch of 5D's online, although out of them Thor usually only offered for fused loops given his own workload. It was almost comical as he knew that certain other gods showed a bit of an interest as well for if they were ever portrayed. "It is... some recovered data. Another branch of them. Containing other cards, more possible loopers... and refuses to show a proper, if temporary, ending point for it with the amount of data I have recovered already. The Baseline is expanding for it and we may have a case of... four anchors."

Ra blinked... and looked over at the monitor, the sixth in Thoth's work space with each of the five Yugioh Branches arranged with a monitor for each. "Have you asked for assistance in this?"

"Hephestus took a look at it and said that I may need to risk at least a three way anchor system. Of the three candidates for anchor, two of them seem to have dimensional counterparts... and the third has connections thus far that could result in issues in the future." Thoth explained. "The problem lies in the expansions. I need to find a stable ending point before I can initiate it."

"Perhaps he might reach it soon?" Ra commented as he pointed to the monitor, the video showing two dragons diving into a dark portal... and Thoth simply looked and hummed. "I'll leave you to it... but if you want some ideas... I know Anubis comes up with some

theories on occasion. And if it is getting too much for you, come and see me or one of the others. We worry you might be pushing yourself too hard over the incident." And with that, the sun god in cosplay walked out.

Thoth sighed... but allowed himself a small smile. For all his strangeness with cosplay and the occasional snake attack on his person by Isis, Ra tried his best to be a father for his fellow Egyptian Gods. It was rumoured that he did so because he hated what Zeus had allowed himself to become. Or perhaps he did it because it allowed him to get away with setting himself on fire for the sake of competing with Izanagi. But either way, it was an inspiration.

Even so he looked at the code. He slowly looked through the information he had and hummed. "It's... unorthodox. Yuya needs to be the anchor and these branches are no stranger to soulbound loopers... but to keep all the dimensions stable..." He muttered slowly to himself. While nowhere near the genius of coding when it came to loops like Hephestus, as the Яeverse incident had proven, he had since taken it upon himself to develop his skills. Nothing, not a virus, not a vengeful spirit, would get the best of him again.

It wasn't even that the branch was all that damaged. It was perfectly fine. The problem was with stability. "Yugo... if you loop quickly I could stabilize the City... but Yuri is far too unhinged to use as a looper at this stage of the baseline. Sora still has room to develop and would not work well with Yuto," he noted. Then he looked at the screen. The scene had changed, showing now three duelists standing against Obelisk Force. "That's it!" he stated gleefully. Oh, it meant that until that person Awoke it wouldn't be stable to have a loop in Academia... but for the time being he could organize things differently. It would mean he'd have to risk stability in order to activate the looper early... but provided that he could handle another of them it shouldn't be too difficult.

"I guess it's like he says... the fun has only just begun." Thoth stated.

ACT 1 (The life and times of an Entertainment Looper.)

Yuya sighed as he stretched a bit. Today was the day of the Battle Royale. Again. How many times had it been so far that this happened? Twenty-five?

"No, we passed that some time ago."

Right... it couldn't be past 50 yet though, could it?

"... the fact we have to ask that question probably isn't a good sign."

Whatever amount... he had been repeating things. Time had repeated. From the day that Yuzu would break the projector and he'd be forced to fight Strong... and create Pendulum Summoning. And then just when they were going to go to the Synchro Dimension, or about that time... things would end. No matter what he did with regards to things, once that day was done, the repeat would reset.

"A strange place to stop, to say the least."

... right, that was the other thing. Since the first time the repeat had happened, he had felt a connection to Yuto. Yuto had actually been experiencing the repeats too, but it had been hard to tell due to the effects of Yuzu's bracelet. And when Yuto eventually ended up fusing with him–

"Which is annoyingly frequent."

-then they ended up finding it easier and easier to communicate with one another. At this point, thinking was like a second way of talking to the two. Sometimes Yuya even let his thought process run and Yuto would, out of boredom, comment on it. This boredom was mainly because they didn't really have all that much time to make big changes. Oh sure, a comment here, explaining the repeats to Reiji there, somehow convincing Sora to form his own faction on the other front... it was weird.

If Yuya was being honest... if Yuto hadn't been repeating, he'd probably have gone crazy.

"Talking to yourself notwithstanding."

Even so... the two hadn't given up. Yuya looked up and slowly adjusted his goggles. Time for another Battle Royale... and maybe this time he might be able to change things.

ACT 2 (Academia... of sorts.)

Yuya groaned as he shook his head and looked around, rubbing sleep from his eyes. He blinked as he realized that this repeat was... different. More different than usual. He couldn't entirely feel his connection to Yuto, which meant that the Xyz dimension counterpart was safe at the least... even if he could feel the presence of Dark Rebellion within him. So nothing weird on that front. His surroundings... he had apparently been resting on a tree just outside of a large white and yellow building. The smell of the sea was faint in the air, but still present... and off in the distance was a volcano. That took a moment or two to recover from. Still he let the memories of this repeat flow in. Same hair, same goggles... his coat was red and white instead of white and red, with a white undershirt to match, but the rest seemed to match up. Even as he contemplated, he noticed a shadow come over him that wasn't from the tree. Blinking, he looked up... and saw a blonde girl in a white and red uniform smiling at him. "Hi," Yuya simply said with a small smile. While he didn't judge a person by how they first appeared, the girl seemed nice enough with how she held herself. Hopefully she wouldn't ask anything before he got the full memories of this repeat.

"Hey, nice to meet you," the girl said. "You wouldn't happen to be feeling a bit Loopy, would you? Like you need something to Anchor yourself with after doing the same thing over and over?"

Yuya blinked. The way she phrased it would be looked over by most, but a good entertainer knows the devil is in the details, and he had caught on to the emphasis she had put into those two words... although he'd admit she hadn't attempted to hide it at all. "Loopy? Wait... same thing..." He noted... and it clicked. "You're repeating time, too?" he asked.

The girl raised an eyebrow, but then let her smile get a little bigger. "Yes. Yes, I am. My name's Alexis Rhodes. Welcome to Duel Academy," Alexis said with a happy grin, holding out her hand. Yuya nodded as he took her hand and pulled himself up.

"Wait, Duel Academy? Do you mean... Academia?" Yuya asked cautiously. If Academia was repeating too, that could be dangerous. "Oh, sorry, my name is Yuya Sakaki... this repeat."

Alexis for the most part nodded. "If you're new to the loops, then changes to your name are something you're going to need to get used to. Like Duel Academy is sometimes called Duel Academia... but never just Academia."

As Yuya nodded... he felt the memories hit him. It was both like what he had heard of Academia from Sora and Serena... and yet not. There was no sign of a Leo Akaba, no war, no soldiers... it seemed just like a Duel School, but without Xyz or Synchro monsters. He was in Slifer Red, the lowest of the dorms, and so far had his Performapals. He had three Pendulum monsters... and both Odd-Eyes and its Pendulum counterpart but hadn't used them yet due to advice from his mother. "Woah... sorry. Haven't gotten a hit of memories that different in a while," Yuya admitted.

"Understandable... you sound like you've never had a Fused Loop before," Alexis noted.

"Fused Loop?"

Alexis sighed and looked around. "Not here... it might be Sunday, but people still come by the Academy building." Slowly she walked past

him and followed a path off to the side. "I know a clearing my friend sometimes uses for duels, we can get some privacy there."

Yuya tilted his head curiously... but simply followed the strange girl. A more cynical side of him (which, if he didn't know better, he would say was Yuto speaking up) warned him that it could be a trap, but given the memories this repeat had given him, he was more inclined to ignore it. Alexis seemed like a nice person after all.

After a few minutes with nothing but a rather excited-seeming Alexis and trees for company, the two emerged in a clearing. Yuya didn't see anything special about it, but he could see by the way Alexis looked around she knew the place well. "Sorry about that," Alexis said as she walked over to a part of the clearing and sat down... and then pulled a duel disk out of her backpack. One that looked positively ancient... but if it was someone else's repeats, and as a result a different world or time, different duel disks had to be expected. Slowly she took her deck out of it. "My last loop had this nutcase overhearing. Bad ending, I decided I was going to be in the slacker dorm this loop," she noted with a slight shiver. "Ok... firstly, as you've probably guessed, this isn't where time usually repeats for you. Do you know what these are at least?" she asked as she held up a card slowly.

"Duel Monster cards, of course," Yuya said. "Who doesn't know that?" For a brief moment he swore that Alexis's already wide grin got wider... but if it did she stopped it as soon as it had appeared. "Happy about something?"

Alexis chuckled. "That obvious? Yeah, the guys and I made bets as to who would be around to make this speech, with side bets concerning familiarity with Duel Monsters and such." With a shake of her head and a quick breath she smiled. "Right... so, I want to show you just what's happening. I want you to think of this as another universe—I know, a bit hard to believe, but stick with me on this one." Yuya decided that he'd stay quiet on his knowledge of other dimensions for the moment, if only because what Alexis was saying

seemed... interesting. "Your universe is represented by this card," she stated as she set a card down on the clearing. "This universe is like this card," she added, setting a card right above the first. "Think of them like a pair of branches on a tree. The very end branches—" she noted... and then flipped them over. Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater seemed to be their names, according to Yuya's memories... apparently he knew a lot about the monsters. "—that are part of a bigger branch with a few similar universes," she continued as she placed down another card, which she soon flipped, revealing Cyber Prima. "Which is part of a big tree of all life." She put down another card and flipped. Cyber Angel Dakini. "Except the tree is also sorta a computer. And the tree is damaged. Badly."

Yuya blinked. "Isn't that a really bad thing for the tree of life to be damaged like that?"

"To say the least, yes," Alexis deadpanned. "It's why time is repeating, Looping as we tend to call it. And like I said... it's not just us. You're probably one of the newest universes to be active."

"And before, you mentioned an... Anchor?" Yuya said.

"Ah right. Think of it like this. Each universe needs at least one point of stability in it at all times. An Anchor is someone from that universe who's always looping... or 'Awake' if we use looper terms. Other loopers might start looping, but they won't be Awake as often as an Anchor is. You've probably experienced that," Alexis explained.

"Yeah. One of my best friends," Yuya admitted. "But what if you have more than one Anchor? Or more than one world? I've been repeat—I mean I've been Awake with this other person being Awake at the same time... and my world is connected to three others. Does that mean there are four anchors?"

Alexis shook her head. "Not unless Yggdrasil has taken a downgrade. This loop is connected to a whole bunch of other dimensions and we're just fine with Jaden, our Anchor. As for two people looping together... you'd be surprised just how many people

are going to sympathize with you within the Duel Monster using group alone. You guys are Co-Anchors, that's all," she explained as she gathered her cards up and into her deck. "Now... because you're one of the Duel Monster loopers I should probably give you a heads up on a few things. Firstly, names. By now I'm wagering you've seen people's names changing?" As Yuya nodded she softly smiled. "Get used to it. A lot of us have it... especially in this loop. I'm Alexis Rhodes 50% of the time, and Tenjoin Asuka the other 50%. It's why you're Yuya Sakaki. This loop uses English terms... and you're speaking English."

"Makes sense." Yuya admitted. "But why is my name unchanged?"

"Because with the exception of Jaden, my usual anchor who you're replacing this time, anchors tend to have the same name in our group," she explained.

"Wait, replacing?"

Alexis slapped her head. "Argh, I knew I'd forget something! Right, because of how things work there are some loops where two universes meet. This is known as a fused loop, which usually has a looper showing up in another looper's universe, replacing one of the people they know, or the two universes combining for one loop. Fused Loops," Alexis explained. "Because of this, you could sometimes not be Awake and yet your friends are. It means there's a visiting Anchor or, in your case, they're replacing the usual anchor." With a sigh, slotting her deck back into the duel disk, she looked up. "So... any questions? Or should we try introducing ourselves now?"

Yuya smiled. "Well seeing as you've helped me out so far, I think it's only fair I introduce myself," he said... only to blink as Alexis stood up, sliding on her duel disk.

"Good. We can duel and introduce ourselves at the same time, can't we?" Alexis pointed out with a little smirk on her face. Yuya could only grin back in return as he pulled off his own backpack... and hummed as he pulled out the duel disk. "Oh, nice! Looks like you got

a customized duel disk!" Indeed the duel disk did look different to the standard one... and in a way that only really made sense to Yuya. For the most part it seemed like a standard Duel Academy duel disk (at least compared to Alexis's own), but beyond the tell-tale marks of the Field Magic slot there was an extra one on the other side of the duel disk and one on the front of it... which if the memories were correct, was the Field Magic zone on this duel disk. "Alright, seeing as you're new we're going to only stick to the decks and duel disks we have on us. I'll teach you how to do this later, but I have copies of other duel disks and cards in... well, think of it as a loop pocket," she explained. Of course, as she smiled, it didn't mean much. The only reason she was in Slifer Red is because she had insisted on joining Duel Academy on her own merits instead of a scholarship, and had dueled Crowler to get his ire focused on her instead of Jaden. Or at least, it had been the plan. Her cards meant little in the way of that.

Yuya nodded. "Alright, but as a warning, I know I have some of the cards from my baseline with me. My parents apparently work at Industrial Illusions in this loop and... one or two tend to stick with me."

"That's fine with me. I like a challenge on occasion," Alexis noted. "Ready?"

"DUEL!" the two declared. It was so strange to Yuya, being in such a relaxed atmosphere and yet not doing an action duel. He still had to resist the urge to perform the familiar chant though.

(Yuya: 4000)

(Alexis: 4000)

"I'll go first," Alexis announced. Yuya blinked as Alexis drew an extra card. "Oh right, you probably use the new rules... Under the rules of this loop, the person who goes first draws a card on their first turn," Alexis explained as she looked over her selection. "For now I'll play one card face down and summon my Cyber Gymnast in defense mode!" As she shouted, a muscle-bound woman in blue and black

rose from the ground in a shimmer of light, a white mask on her face as she took to one knee and crossed her arms over her chest (800/1800). "With that I end my turn."

Yuya nodded. "Alright, draw!" Yuya declared... and as he looked at his hand he couldn't help but smile a little. Yes, there was only one pendulum monster, but it seemed like that was because none of his Performapals had it anymore. He was fine with that; he had gotten used to it over the repeats. But already he had seen a possible move. "I play Performapal Whip Snake!" A surge of light lit up as the familiar top-hatted snake leapt onto the field and slithered in front of Yuya with a grin on its face (1700/900). "I activate Whip Snake's special ability! Once per turn I can switch one monster's attack and defence points," Yuya noted as Whip Snake brought up the heart-shaped end of its tail, swinging it almost like a pendulum as its gaze seemed to fire out, which caused Cyber Gymnast to stumble back in shock before tripping and landing on her back (800/1800 1800/800). "Whip Snake, attack!" With the attack declared, the snake coiled itself up... and then bounced out towards Cyber Gymnast like a spring, mouth open as it pushed through Cyber Gymnast, shattering the target. "And with that I'll set one card face down and both me and my happy friend here end my turn," Yuya finished as Performapal Whip Snake slithered back over to Yuya's side of the field.

Alexis couldn't help but grin. "Gotta say, for a kid out of your element, you know how to make an opening move."

"It's not all that different from back home," Yuya admitted. "Just less hunting for Action Cards and more focusing on what you have on you. I can still entertain like this too."

"Well, while the theatrics are fun, I think it's time I stopped being so easy on you. My turn!" Alexis declared as she drew her card. "First I'm going to activate a classic, Pot of Greed! This lets me draw two more cards from my deck." After drawing, Alexis couldn't help but smirk a bit. "And now I think it's time I showed you just what it's like to face someone who's usually the Queen of Duel Academy. I play Polymerization!"

"Now this is getting interesting!" Yuya admitted as the swirling portal appeared.

"Oh, it's definitely getting interesting. I'm going to fuse my Etoile Cyber and my Blade Skater together!" Alexis stated as the red haired Cyber dancer and the bald purple and lavender blade-armed skater appeared side by side. "Normally we don't do these but... The star ballerina! Fuse together with the ice skater armed for battle to form the ultimate in grace and strength!" As she chanted the two Cyber girls swirled together and into the portal. "I fusion summon my Cyber Blader!"

The entire surrounding seemed to change as a lake manifested on the duel field, Whip Snake recoiling with a start as it leapt back onto Yuya's face down card. It seemed serene even as the swirling portal for Polymerization swung above it slowly, changing angle as the water beneath it started to swirl, almost into a miniature tornado of water... before it suddenly stopped as the water dispersed into mist and dew, the dark haired ice skater twirling slightly as it did (2100/1800).

"Next I'll summon my Cyber Tutu!" Alexis added, the young pink haired ballerina twirling onto the field next to Cyber Blader with a smile (1000/800). "Cyber Blader attacks Performapal Whip Snake!" Alexis called out, even as the lake scene dispersed and Cyber Blader rushed towards Whip Snake. "Whirlwind Slash!" Whip Snake hurriedly brought up its tail again, swinging it three times before the twirling Cyber Blader's bladed shoe cut through him and he shattered (Yuya: 4000 3600). "With that I activate De-Fusion to separate my Cyber Blader back into Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater," Alexis noted as she swiftly played the card from her hand as Cyber Blader twirled faster and faster... until it split into two, both Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater twirling back onto the field, landing in the same pose (1200/1600) (1400/1500). "And I'm willing to guess that you can figure out what this means. If my three girls land direct attacks on you, regardless of their effects... it's game over. Girls, get

him!" Alexis declared, Blade Skater rushing forward as both Cyber Tutu and Etoile Cyber leapt into the air.

Yuya, though, grinned. In fact he hadn't stopped grinning since Alexis had fusion summoned earlier that turn. "Usually it would be, you're right! But I can't just have this duel end without some partners to dance with your lovely ladies! I activate my Hippo Carnival!" Yuya announced gleefully, the spell card barely getting time to rise before three blasts of smoke issued onto the field... and then cleared, revealing three hippos dancing and chanting in what could only be described as tribal dancer outfits. "This card summons out three of these lovely ladies, Hippo Tokens! And while they're on the field, you can't attack anything but them," he added, the three leaping into a group pose in front of Yuya (0/0)X3.

Alexis just rolled her eyes. "Remind me never to introduce you to my brother. I don't think Yggdrasil could survive that much showmanship," she deadpanned. "But a good job anyway. My Cyber girls will instead attack your three tokens. Show these ladies just how to dance, girls." Cyber Tutu seemed to take that rather literally, landing in front of the Hippo Token and twirling. Curious, the Hippo Token leapt out of the formation and tried to mimic Cyber Tutu... only to eventually stumble out of the twirl, dazed as she fell back and shattered. Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater, by comparison, took more direct routes as they respectively kicked and sliced their Hippo Tokens. "With that I set a card face down and end my turn... and I have to say, I'm impressed," Alexis admitted.

"Right back at you," Yuya said. "You sure you've never been in my... uh, loop before? Because that looked like straight up Dueltainment... Entertainment Dueling? No, the first sounds right at the moment."

Alexis chuckled. "Another one of those things that changes from loop to loop, I guess. But yeah, not many people are prepared for a low level one turn kill... and especially not from me. Not unless they actually know what they're doing. So good job... but those Hippos alone can't save you."

"I know, but I think it's time I swing into action. Draw!" Yuya declared... before he grinned. "I play Pot of Greed! So I'm going to draw two more cards!" As he drew he looked them over... and his grin only got wider. "Ladies and Gentlemen! Behold the duelling style of Yusho Sakaki caried on by his son Yuya Sakaki! Dueltainment!" Yuya announced. "And watch as with my Scale 8 Timegazer Magician and my Scale 1 Stargazer Magician, I set the pendulum scales!" As he held the cards out in front, the duel disk opened the two side slots. Yuya swiftly set the magicians in each respective zone... and grinned as the duel disk lit up with the word 'Pendulum'. The two magicians rose into the air surrounded by light, a crystal pendant swinging between them as a number appeared under each, a 1 underneath the white and blue robed Stargazer and an 8 underneath the black and red Timegazer. "With these cards I can summon any card from my hand with a level between 2 and 7!"

Alexis didn't actually look worried... but excited. "I knew it! That's where those cards came from," she whispered... but Yuya didn't notice as he glanced up.

"Swing, pendulum of my soul. Draw an arc of light across the ether! Pendulum Summon! Come forth, my monsters!" Yuya chanted, four lights flowing down as the pendulum circled, a portal opening up to allow them through. "Level 4, Performapal Silver Claw!" The long-clawed wolf with a bow tie shook itself as it appeared in a burst of purple light (1800/700). "Level 5, Performapal Drumming Kong!" In a burst of green light the gorilla with a drumset for a chest ooked as he pounded said chest (1600/900). "And finally, appear now with your wondrous and beautiful dichromatic eyes. Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!" With a mighty roar the last orange light dissipated as the red and white dragon roared and nodded to Yuya... who had to stop himself half way into going to leap up onto it. This wasn't an Action Duel after all (2500/2000). "Finally I play Smile World, a Spell which means that all my monsters gain attack points equal to the amount of monsters on the field, times 100!" Yuya added as instead of the usual array of smiling faces, one giant, almost childishly drawn smile appeared behind him, with Drumming Kong's smile getting wider, the

ferocious-looking Silver Claw managing a grin despite itself, and Odd-Eyes... using its eyes to smile in an odd way. Alexis wasn't judging, though, given what she had seen (1800/700 2400/700) (1600/900 2200/900), (2500/2000 3200/2000). "Performapal Silver Claw attacks Cyber Tutu! And when he attacks, he gains 300 attack points!"

"It would usually, but not this time! I play Instant Fusion!" Alexis declared. "And because of this I can fuse my Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater together again to form Cyber Blader! And when she hits the field, all of your monsters, spells, and traps will have their effects negated!"

"I activate my Stargazer Magician's pendulum effect! If a spell card is activated in the battle step, I can negate it and set that card face down, where it can't be activated this turn! Horoscope Divination!" Yuya noted as Stargazer Magician raised his staff and pointed it at Instant Fusion, forcing it back face down. The blade-clawed wolf growled as it leapt at Cyber Tutu. "And my wolf's effect still activates!" (2400/700 2700/700).

Alexis winced as her Cyber Tutu was cut through (Alexis: 4000 2300). "And I'm guessing Drumming Kong and Odd-Eyes are going to attack Etoile Cyber and Blade Skater?" she asked.

"Of course!" Yuya stated enthusiastically as Drumming Kong simply beat his chest, the drumming noise getting louder with each drumbeat. "And because of Drumming Kong's effect, he gets to give himself an extra 600 attack points!" Yuya noted (2200/900 2800/900) even as Blade Skater cried out and shattered with enough force to have Alexis wince slightly (Alexis: 2300 800). "And finally, Odd-Eyes! Strike Spiral Burst!" Yuya declared, Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon charging up... and firing the spiraling red and black beam straight at Etoile Cyber... who didn't even move from the spot as she stood in front of Alexis, unflinching until the end. (Alexis: 800 0).

Alexis grinned as the holograms faded. "Well that's game then. Gotta say, you handled my Cyber girls pretty well. I might need to use

some other cards next time," she admitted. Before Yuya could say anything, the two heard slow clapping and looked around. Slowly emerging from behind the trees stepped a black-haired and blue-suited teen. "Hey, Chazz."

"Alexis," Chazz said with a nod. He looked at Yuya and chuckled. "With hair like that it's not hard to see why you replaced Jaden. Name's Chazz Princeton."

Yuya simply grinned. "Yuya Sakaki, looper and, if I've gathered correctly... I'm the Anchor of my loop."

Chazz glanced at Alexis, who simply smirked... and sighed. "Yeah, yeah, Alexis, you won the bet, I get it. An Anchor who uses Pendulum cards, you could only be the next Anchor in our bunch of loops."

"'Our'?" Yuya asked.

"This isn't the only other loop where we play Duel Monsters," Alexis explained. "In fact there are three others, apart from yours and this one..."

Yuya blinked. "Um... wow... that's a lot of Duel Monsters."

"Trust me, kid, if you keep playing like I just saw you playing... you'll do just fine," Chazz admitted.

Even many loops later, Yuya would remember the kindness of the first two loopers that he met outside his own loop, even if he did start plotting pranks against them for not warning him about certain duelists by the end of the loop.

ACT 3 (What's in a name? By Crossoverpairinglover)

"Time itself is broken, Yuzu. Space, too. Everything, really. Whenever we get to a certain point, we start all over again."

The words of her best friend Yuya were often of the silly variety, but those words had been said quite seriously.

When she had found herself once again watching her friend duel Strong Ishijima, defeating him with Rune-Eyes Pendulum Dragon, and confronted him later, she was quite willing to believe him.

Now, finding herself in a city known as Heartland, walking side by side with Shun Kurosaki (who actually looked happy, an emotion that Yuzu had no reason to believe he ever showed before) as his little sister Yuzu Kurosaki, there was no doubt left in her mind whatsoever.

"...You'll get your very own Xyz monster for your birthday." He finished his little speech she had 'woken up' halfway through. "Xyz monsters are very tricky to master, but I'm sure you'll be able to figure it out. After all, you're brilliant."

Remembering her attempts to learn Fusion summoning, Yuzu wasn't sure she agreed with Shun here.

Speaking of Fusion, Yuzu couldn't help but feel a sense of dread.

What little she knew of the Xyz dimension told her that the Fusion Dimension would soon attack.

Would he be with them?

Could she stop it before it even began...

BOOM!

ZAP!

Random screams of terror.

Apparently… not.

Yuzu would love to tell tales to potential versions of her juniors that she had single handily stopped the entire fusion army's attack with a ferocious card combination.

But she didn't. Heck, even Yugi or Yusei (who apparently could bend the laws of reality itself and could hyper evolve his cards beyond the limitations of regular cards, respectively), and arguably the two most-skilled duelists in all of space-time according to Yuya, would be hard pressed to pull that off.

That, and Yuzu had found out firsthand about the potential effect of using spell and trap cards with real world effects in a full out war.

Giant Trunade sucked. Yuzus were not meant to fly (unless there was a universe with Flying Duels somewhere she wasn't aware of).

Thankfully, she landed on something that was not metal, concrete, or water.

Not that thankfully...

"Thirty-seven!?"

She had lost three of her cards. Nothing vital, but without a full deck, she could not duel.

And Yuzu had a bad feeling that not dueling in this loop was not an option.

She took a deep breath while sitting lotus style in front of what remained of her deck, sans its fusion support, as she did not take her deck with her after the last loop. While Yuya had shown her how to make a Subspace Pocket, she did not have enough space in it yet for more than...

Her eyes widening, Yuzu realized she did in fact have three more cards.

Grinning like a madman, the Academia soldier laughed as the Xyz trash before him was sealed in a card, leaving nothing behind but his duel disk and his cards.

Idly picking it up, the soldier (a dark haired average joe) removed the cards and looked them over in amusement.

"Hieratics? Who would play a deck involving level 6 monsters you have to tribute to do anything good with?!"

To the soldier, the only good thing you were going to get out of a scum deck like this… was a fire.

Hearing the sound of footsteps nearby, the soldier turned sharply to spot a cute little girl with pink hair glaring at him in fury, apparently noting his trophy.

A hero?

Those were always fun to stomp the life out of.

"Before I attack with all my monsters, I activate Meteor Rain!"

Yuzu grimaced. During the course of this duel, she had found out a few things that had caught her off guard.

The ferocity and brutality of dueling for your life (the sort of things Shun had talked about during his duel with Sora), was something she certainly hadn't been taught by her father.

The horror of having an opponent who seriously wanted you to suffer. There was a difference, after all, between wanting to win, and wanting to beat your opponent black and blue and seal them in a card to do who knows what with.

Finally, she had been caught off guard by changes in her monsters effects. Canon could special summon herself, Sonata could increase attack and defense if she was special summoned, and Aria...

Well, Aria (1600, 1200) was the only reason she was going to survive this turn, considering she was special summoned by her Solo: First Movement (which also had a different effect when it came to selecting its summon target), and thus could not be destroyed.

Though this part was going to hurt.

Surrounded by a vortex protected by a sheen, otherwise known as Fusion Gate and the spell card Field Barrier, she found her Aria being struck at by three different fusion monsters.

"Rabid Horseman!" Her Melodious blocked an axe blow from an angry centaur.

"Crimson Sunbird!" A giant red bird slammed its wings right into Aria.

"Cybersaurus!" Aria was rained on with bullets from a cyborg dinosaur.

"Still alive, huh, girl? Well, next turn will fix that. I end my turn." Even though his hand was empty, her opponent could easily restock it with his Heart of the Underdog, which allowed him to draw more cards whenever he drew a normal monster.

Conveniently, they made up a large part of his deck.

Yuzu gritted her teeth as she drew for her turn, before grinning.

"What's so funny, girl? Finally got that Xyz monster?!"

Yuzu ignored his taunts before holding up a monster. "When I control a Melodious monster, I can special summon my Canon the Melodious Diva from my hand!" The blue haired fairy appeared on the field in a burst of light (1400, 2000).

"Yawn."

"I tribute both of my Melodious! Enchanting melody echoing in the heaven. Awaken the sleeping virtuoso. Come, Level 8 Mozarta the

Melodious Maestra!"

Garbed in red and her wings like piano keys, Yuzu's pre-fusion ace monster descended from the song of the heavens (2600, 2000).

The soldier was not impressed. "You really think that card scares me. I have more than one fusion weapon in my deck, girl. I specialize in destroying cards like that. Cards that inspire hope. So go ahead, make your final stand. It's all the sweeter when I get to render it pointless."

"Pointless?! I think not. With the Scale 1 Stargazer Magician and the Scale 8 Timegazer Magician, I'm setting the Pendulum Scale!"

"Pendu-what?" the soldier questioned as two spellcasters appeared in the middle of blue columns of light, rising up on either side of the girl, with a pair of numbers (1 and 8).

"Now, I can special summon monsters between the levels of 2 and 7. Swing, pendulum of souls! Draw an arc of light across the ether! Pendulum Summon! Appear now! My monsters!"

She would figure out her own chant for this later.

Two bursts of light flew down from the giant blue hole that opened up.

"Come forth, Shopina the Melodious Maestra!" The blue-dressed fairy of similar size to Mozarta landed elegantly beside Yuzu (2300, 1700). "And Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!" The large red dragon roared rather inelegantly (2500, 2000).

The soldier felt a bit nervous now.

"Now, I activate the effects of Shopina and Mozarta! First, I return Sonata to my hand, then special summon her via Mozarta!" The green-skinned, blue-dressed fairy fluttered down to join the Fantasia Trio and Odd-Eyes (1200, 1000). "Because Sonata was special

summoned, her effect increased the power of all Fairy-Types in play!" A musical aura surrounded all of her baseline monsters (3100, 2500), (2800, 2200), (1700, 1500).

"Impossible...you Xyz scum! You must have cheated!"

"You invaded this dimension with a summoning method we knew nothing of. I personally think that's more qualified to be called cheating than this." Yuzu pointed right at his monsters. "Odd-Eyes, Mozarta, Shopina, take out all of his Fusion monsters!"

The burst of light and fire was the last thing the soldier saw before he knew defeat.

"There exists a power that can alter the fate of battle. Losers become winners, winners lose for no good reason, and morality is shifted for reasons that defy all logic. This power is a dangerous enemy to Academia's goals."

"Yeah, yeah, but don't we have one of those people on our side?"

"We do, but he's under our control. These Xyz scum, however, might have two bearers of the power." The captain and elite soldier noted a video feed behind them of a purple-haired duelist with a black dragon.

"There is definitely at least one here. They call him Yuto."

"Is he the one I'm supposed to hunt?"

"Negative. Your target is the the theoretical second. This one has characteristics that make our superiors question her status as one with the power of Yu, but records suggest she managed to pull off a miracle."

The video feed behind them changed from Yuto to the Pendulum Summon.

"Your mission is to make sure the miracle is sealed away."

The short soldier grinned evilly, a lollipop sticking out of his mouth like a cigarette.

Meanwhile, back in the battlefield, where a soldier lay unconscious, he found himself stripped of not only his duel disk deck, but his trophies.

All of his trophies, be they duel disk, or fallen Xyz users' decks.

"I overlay my level 4 Canon the Melodious Diva and my Level 4 Serena the Melodious Diva!"

Two yellow lights shot forth from Yuzu's field into a spiraling purple vortex.

Her opponent, a Duel Soldier currently protected by only an Ancient Gear Golem (3000, 3000), didn't look too concerned. After all, what could a single Xyz monster do to him?

"Songs of the world, merge together into a warrior of rebellion! Xyz Summon! Be born, Rank 4! Starliege Paladynamo!" (2000, 1000)

The white-armored warrior monster did not seem to bother the Academia member that much.

"You done yet? I have some looting to do, and your pointless attempts to set up a defense are keeping me away from my loot. Do you know quickly you have to move to get any good loot around here?"

"I activate Starliege Paladynamo's monster effect!" Yuzu didn't pity his lack of looting time as both overlay units were absorbed by her monster's sword, which began to glow. "By removing both overlay units, my monster can decrease the attack power of one monster you control to zero and cancel any abilities it may have!"

From the sword shot out a bright light, which struck the Golem head on and caused it to hunch over in agony (0,0).

The Duel Soldier suddenly realized he only had 1600 life points left.

"Starliege Paladynamo, attack and end this once and for all!"

Looking around, hoping in vain there might be some randomly generated card that could save him at the last second, his Golem was sliced in half and all was over.

His hand spilled away from him, with one card in particular flying all the way to Yuzu's feet.

Picking the card up, Yuzu's eyebrow rose in surprise at the card that she had gained.

She had Polymerization once more.

The Fusion spell glowed, as more cards appeared behind it.

Yuzu's eyes went wide at the sight of all her fusion support cards now in hand.

Sitting on top of a hill, the Duel Sanctuary had taken great damage from the attacks of the Fusion Dimension forces.

Its outside was scorched and broken. The Dojo where the great learned to Xyz summon and improve their dueling skills was no more.

Yuzu noted the shattered statues that guarded it, the mighty Blade Armored Ninja and Tiras, Keeper of Genesis. Obviously someone with more time than sense had decided they needed to be broken some more.

However, upon entering the broken dojo, its insides were not what she was expecting.

One did not expect the insides of a burned-out building to be a large room made of stones with stairs and doors seemingly everywhere.

Yuzu blinked, wondering if she was hallucinating. However, then she noticed the statues that stood everywhere around her.

To one side there stood a statue of a magician with a large staff, partnered with a statue of a female magician and additional statues that resembled monsters that Yuzu was actually familiar with: monsters like Buster Blader, Curse of Dragon, the Magnet Warriors, Kuriboh, and Summoned Skull.

On the other side of the room were a trio of identical dragons staring them down. Just like the Magicians, behind them stood other monsters that she recognized: La Jinn, the X Y and Z monsters, and Vorse Raider.

Looking around, she noticed some other statues on the various upper and lower levels of the room, which Yuzu could not figure out how one would get to. She saw statues of Red Eyes and Gilford the Lightning, of Jinzo and Flame Swordsmen, of Harpie Ladies and many others that all made her head hurt.

However, she saw no Synchro, Xyz or Pendulum cards.

Continuing to walk through the room, hoping it might make more sense if she continued forward, the room began to morph once more.

From a great maze, it reforged itself into a large school building surrounded by tablets and shining with the brightness of a tropical sun.

The statues from before had vanished.

Looking around rapidly in unease, she noticed large posters stuck to the front of the school, advertisements much like the ones found all over Miami.

One poster depicted a series of monsters that resembled heroes.

A second poster featured Ojama Monsters, the Armed Level Dragons and th monsters.

A third poster featured Cyber Dragons.

A fourth had creatures embedded with jewels and a massive dragon.

Poster after poster, all with monster cards on them.

"This is freaky..." she muttered to herself.

And like before, no Synchro, Xyz, or Pendulum monsters.

Not sure if she was going to enjoy what happened next, she noted the door that would take her, theoretically, inside this school.

She opened the door.

VROOM!

And was nearly run over as she found herself on the edge of a massive track where people were racing on motor bikes.

Still not sure exactly what was going on, she looked upward and saw floating holographic advertisements for whatever it was that was going on here.

There were holographic images of a white dragon flying above a group of Synchro Monsters and low-level effect monsters, including a pink bird and a bolt-studded hedgehog.

A second one featured a red and black dragon, followed mostly by fiends and warriors.

A third had a serpentine dragon, pursued by winged humanoids that made her think of Kurosaki's Raid Raptors.

Synchro Monsters. Synchro Monsters everywhere.

VROOM!

And Motorcycles. Kinda like Yugo's.

She could even see a fusion monster or two dotted around in the holograms, but not Ritual monsters, Xyz monsters, or Pendulum monsters.

VROOM!

Dang, those things were loud.

Not particularly thinking about where she might go from here, she just tried to get away from the loud roar of the machines.

Instead, she found herself in a blue desert at night. A large, green and gold ship of some sort hung above her in the sky,

"Okay, this has gone far enough!" she complained loudly, as numbers began to dance around her.

The number 39 came to rest in front of her, and Yuzu found herself seeing the image of a mighty warrior, aided by magicians, golems and warriors of various forms.

It left, and the numbers 10, 20, and 30 rested before her, and Yuzu saw a great shining dragon, a beast of galaxies and light. Beneath it flew others bathed in that same light.

Those numbers departed as well, and the numbers 17, 32, and 101 greeted her, as Yuzu saw massive dragons and ships of the sea, aided by an aquarium or two of sea monsters.

Looking up as those visions faded, Yuzu saw what appeared to be over 100 of those glowing numbers formed a giant spiraling vortex above her, descending toward her like the tornadoes that Sawatari was fond of using.

Yuzu's screams were cancelled out by the roar of the number storm.

When Yuzu came to, she found herself looking up at a large statue of Yuya, as if he were a god to be worshiped.

Pushing herself off the ground and dusting off her skirt, Yuzu backed away from the statue as she saw it greater detail.

The statue of Yuya stood taller than Yu-Show, and was partnered with Odd-Eyes. At their feet was a pedestal, decorated on the front with a carving of what looked like herself with her Melodious monsters. The sides, from what she could see, had similar decorations (she could see a Gongenzaka side and a Reiji side. She had no idea what was on the back).

Looking to her right, she spotted a statue of Yuto with similar details. He was partnered with Dark Rebellion, and stood on a pedestal that featured carvings, the front showing a girl she assumed was Ruri, while a side featured Kurosaki and his Raid Raptors.

Two other statues were also present, each featuring a Yuya look-alike and a dragon atop a pedestal. One was a boy whose hair oddly resembled a banana, the other whose eyebrows were creepy and had Serena (or was it Selena?) at the front of his pedestal.

So, what was this, The Great Yuya Temple?

"They say those who have the power of Yu can alter the fate of a duel. Resonating with their cards, a Yu user can ensure he or she draws exactly what they need, when they need it, even if the card itself does not exist in their deck, or even at all. It's a power that has gone by many names: The Heart of the Cards, Shining Draw, Destiny Draw...it's rather unfair if you think about it."

The familiar voice that made that comment was unnervingly familiar to Yuzu, and with a shiver she turned to see that he was here as well.

"Yu is a mark of someone who champions the causes of friends, comrades, and even rivals. The power infects them as well from its original host, and grants them a limited version of the same power," the candy-loving Sora continued, all while making a face that made her rather uncomfortable (the sort he had during his fight with Kurosaki). "They say that the Yu bearers hold the fate of their times and their worlds in their hands. No matter the odds, the Yu's will prevent the end of what they protect, down to their last card, and rarely if ever fail. So long as Yu remains, victory is no longer the exclusive right of the superior over the inferior. Yu turns the tide of fate, and it cannot be allowed to do so this time. So, lesser Yu bearer." Sora activated his duel disk and gave her a challenging look. "While your name is not a true Yu, you are far too close to it to be allowed to continue to impact this war. Prepare to be sealed."

Sora.

The boy who had declared himself Yuya's apprentice, then barged into Yu-Show Duel School life.

He was lazy and prideful, didn't take anything seriously, and had an ego bigger than Sawatari's.

Either Sawatari, if she really thought about it.

Yet, he taught her Fusion Summoning. Better yet, he helped teach her how to stop Fusion Summoners.

Was it some sort of nefarious plan? Or did he merely have the ability to be a decent human when Xyz wasn't involved?

Regardless of that question, he was her opponent.

He had to be defeated.

"Duel!"

And so he shall.

"Ladies first!" Yuzu declared as she noted her hand. It was Stargazer, Timegazer, Shopina, Serena, and Soprano.

"With the scale 1 Stargazer Magician, and the Scale 8 Timegazer Magician, I set the Pendulum Scales!"

In two pillars of bright light, the Pendulum Magicians scaled into the sky, causing Sora only a moment's surprise.

It would seem he was forewarned about them.

"Pendulum Summon! Appear, my monsters!" she shouted as three bursts of light descended from the sky and formed before her.

"Shopina the Melodious Maestra!" (2300, 1700)

"Serena the Melodious Diva!" The red and purple maestra appeared in a dazzle of color (400, 1900).

"And Soprano the Melodious Songstress!" The green skinned, purple and white dressed diva landed in a burst of notes (1400, 1400).

"So, this is Pendulum Summoning," Sora mused to himself.

Yuzu, however, wasn't done yet.

"I overlay my level 4 Serena and my level 4 Soprano!"

Sora's eyes shot wide open as the two lower-leveled light monsters flew into the spiraling Xyz vortex.

"Songs of the sky, meld your energies into one! Spark the will of others to go forward! Arrive! Xyz summon! Rank 4, Fairy Cheer Girl!"

In a flutter of sparks the cheerleading fairy appeared beside the Maestra (1900, 1500).

"Xyz summon," Sora muttered darkly.

"I activate the effect of Fairy Cheer Girl! By removing an overlay unit, I can draw one card!"

The pom-poms of the cheerleader took in one Overlay unit as Yuzu's top deck glowed. With that, she drew Aria.

"Next, I activate Shopina's effect. Once per turn, I can return a Melodious monster from my graveyard to my hand!" As there was only one in her grave, she was able to return Soprano. "Turn end!"

"Well then, it's my turn, DRAW!" Sora drew from his deck before giving her a creepy smile. "I summon Fluffal Dog!"

Yuzu raised an eyebrow, not being familiar with that card.

The rather cute dog appeared on the field with a flutter of wings (1700, 1000).

"When I summon Fluffal Dog, I can move a Fluffal or Edge Imp Sabres from my deck to my hand," Sora noted as his deck pushed out a card. "I choose to add Edge Imp Sabres. Then, I activate Polymerization!"

Crud.

"Claws of the Demon! Canines of the Beast! Become one and reveal a new form! Fusion Summon! Be born, vicious predator that destroys all in its path, Frightfur Wolf!"

Frightfur Wolf?

The purple wolf, as mutilated and creepy as any of Sora's other toys, appeared on the field in with an uneasy aura with a demonic howl (2000, 1500).

"Next, I equip Fusion Weapon to Frightfur Wolf!"

The equip spell card caused the blades of Frightfur Wolf to glow and get larger, as its power swelled (3500, 3000).

"3500 attack points!?" Yuzu exclaimed in horror.

"That line would sound better if it had 9000 attack points," Sora idly commented as he took a lick of a lollipop in hand. "Oh, and one more thing I should mention: My Wolf, it can attack twice a turn, and that's just what it's going to do. Attack the overgrown opera singer and the Xyz trash, my Wolf!"

With a loud howl, the Wolf charged right at them, its blades looking hungry for blood.

Yuzu instinctively looked for an action card, before reminding herself there were no action cards in this dimension.

The attack first struck Fairy Cheer Girl with a bang. (4000- 2400).

Then it sliced Shopina in half (2400- 1200).

Yawning, Sora ended his turn. "Is that really all you've got?" he asked in a bored tone. "I'm starting to doubt that you are actually that dangerous."

Ignoring his taunt and drawing Elegy, Yuzu declared once more, "Pendulum Summon! Appear, my monsters!"

Three more lights descended once more onto the field.

"Aria the Melodious Diva!" (1600, 1200).

"Elegy the Melodious Diva!" The purple and green fairy made her debut showing in defense mode, like the rest (2000, 1200).

"Soprano the Melodious Songstress!" (1400, 1400).

"When I special summon Elegy, all my Melodious monsters gain 300 attack points!" Yuzu declared as all three of her defensive monsters glowed (1900, 1200) (2300, 1200) (1700, 1400).

"I end my turn."

Yawning, Sora drew again from his deck, and liked what he drew. "Sorry, girl, but you've lost. I activate Raigeki!"

A massive lightning bolt fell from the sky, striking all of Yuzu's fairies.

Sora looked triumphant, but lost that look once the lightning vanished, revealing all fairies intact.

"What!?"

"When I control Elegy, all special summoned Melodious monsters cannot be destroyed by card effects," Yuzu explained as Sora glared at the fairies.

"Clever, but not clever enough. I attack Soprano and Elegy with Frightfur Wolf!"

Howling, the demonic toy charged forward and lunged right at Soprano...only to be bounced off and fall on its back in front of Sora, dazed.

"How...!?"

"When I control a special summoned Aria, Melodious monsters cannot be destroyed by battle or targeted by card effects!"

Sora just stared at the defensive fairies in shock. "How the heck am I supposed to beat you if you pull something like that off!?"

Yuzu smirked at Sora's unease as she drew Cards from the Sky. "Turn end."

Sora scowled, and drew a card of his own. "Turn end."

Drawing, Yuzu drew Mozarta the Melodious Maestra. "I activate Cards from the Sky! By banishing a Fairy from my hand—" She banished Mozarta. "—I can draw two cards!" Drawing, she drew Miraculous Descent and Opera the Melodious Diva.

"I set a card, and end my turn!"

Scowling, Sora drew, and smirked.

"I summon Edge Imp Tomahawk!"

A living rack of axes rose up to the field (1800, 800).

"I activate Tomahawk's monster effect! By discarding an Edge Imp —" Sora discarded Edge Imp Saw. "—you take 800 damage!"

With a glowing light, an energy blast was sent right into Yuzu, pushing her back significantly (1200-400).

Sora set a card as well.

"Turn end."

Drawing Sonata, Yuzu grinned.

It was time to counter-attack.

"I activate Miraculous Descent! I can special summon one banished Fairy-Type monster! Enchanting melody echoing in the heavens, awaken the sleeping virtuoso. Come, Level 8! Mozarta, the Melodious Maestra!"

The red fairy leader of the Melodious descended to the field (2600, 2000), (2900, 2000).

"Next, I normal summon Opera the Melodious Diva (2300/1000), but she won't be staying for long!"

(Something's missing here, but I'm not sure if it's attack or defense, and whether or not the power-up should be marked.)

"What, are you going to Xyz Summon?! Because I'm afraid that isn't possible! I activate my trap card...!"

"Yeah, no." Yuzu interrupted his little rant as he activated some sort of anti-Xyz trap card.

"What!? What else could you possibly be trying to do!?" Sora demanded in shock.

"I can use Soprano to conduct a Fusion Summon," Yuzu told the boy plainly as he gaped at her in shock.

"Fusion...that...that's impossible!"

"Angel's song! Echoed voice of perfection! With guidance of the baton, gather your power! Fusion Summon! Now come here to the stage! Schuberta the Melodious Maestra!"

The red-garbed fairy fusion monster arrived on the field in a shower of song notes (2400, 2000) (2700, 2000).

"It's not possible...!"

"Oh, it is possible," Yuzu told the surprised soldier. "But don't worry, if you're expecting any Synchro Monsters next...I don't have any. Now, for Schuberta's effect!" Sora's graveyard glowed, as Fluffal Dog, Edge Imp Sabres, and Polymerization found themselves banished and absorbed into Schuberta's wand. (2700, 2000). (3300, 2000).

"No matter," Sora told her. "You still can't overpower my Wolf!"

"When I control a Melodious Monster, I can special summon Sonata the Melodious Diva!" From her hand the green fairy crouched on the field in defense mode (1200, 1000) (1500, 1000). "And when this special summoned monster is in play, all my Melodious Monsters get stronger, by 500 attack and defense points!"

"What!?"

Sora's surprise resonated as the entire Fairy army glowed (1900, 1200) (2400, 1700), (2300, 1200), (2800, 1700), (2900, 2000),

(3400, 2500), (3300, 2000), (3800, 2500), (1500, 1000), (2000, 1500).

Changing Elegy to attack mode, Yuzu had game.

"Battle! Schuberta, attack Frightfur Wolf!"

With a song blast, the wolf was sent flying into a million pieces, raining down on Sora like hail (4000- 3700).

"Mozarta, destroy Edge Imp Tomahawk!"

Another song blast struck the Edge Imp, shattering it as the destroyed axes flew right at Sora. Sora barely avoided being severed by them (3700- 2100).

"Now, Elegy, let's end this! Direct attack!" A blast of song energy flew right towards Sora...as a clock-like demon rose up in the way of the attack and formed a barrier, blocking it (0,0).

"What!?"

"Battle Fader can be special summoned from the hand to end the battle phase if a direct attack is declared," Sora informed Yuzu as he drew for turn. "So, this is what a Yu can do. Multiple special summons, near perfect reversals of fortune...I guess I'm going to have to go all out on you. I activate Fusion Ultimatum!"

The spell card that Sora was holding wasn't something that Yuzu had ever heard of before. Yuya had mentioned that sometimes cards were exclusive to a loop; perhaps this was one of those cards.

"First, I must discard my entire hand and destroy all cards I control." Sora wiped his field and hand bare. "Then, I can special summon any Fusion monster I want from my extra deck, ignoring summoning restrictions." A card shot out of Sora's extra deck. "Bizarre toys possessed by demons! Destroy the ignorant peons who dare to

oppose you! FUSION SUMMON! Come forth and appear! The chimeric fusion of all toys! Frightfur Mad Chimera!"

The horrific fusion of fusion horrors was now staring down Yuzu's fairies, just as horrifying as ever (2800, 2000).

"Finally, this card banishes all monsters you control, without targeting them, whose level is lower than my fusion monster!"

With a horrified scream, all of her Melodious monsters who weren't Mozarta vanished, taking with them all protections (2600, 2000).

"Now, battle!" With a missile from its mouth, the Chimera sent an attack flying right into Mozarta, destroying her and sending Yuzu flying into the air, tumbling to the ground (400-200).

With a mad grin, Sora went on about how Mozarta was now his and had it appear on his side (2600, 2000) (1300, 1000), but how his card prevented non-fusion monsters from attacking, and that Chimera was now more powerful (2800, 2000) (3100, 2000).

"Your move...if you can do anything," Sora taunted as Yuzu prepared to pull a destiny draw, before suddenly she felt a wave of pain cross through her.

Suddenly Yuzu found herself in a dark area that seemed to stretch on forever. When she looked around she saw she stood next to three other girls arranged in a square.

She had to stifle a surprised gasp... One of them was Serena! And there was a ringing noise... a loud ringing noise coming from... a pendant? And it looked so much like Yuya's and yet wasn't...

Another of the girls looked at her and Yuzu looked back... Was this Ruri? She couldn't make out the girl's face, but reached out to her as the girl reached back.

The last thing Yuzu consciously remembered was a number.

39.

Meanwhile back in the real-world Temple of Yu, Sora looked a little unnerved.

The girl had frozen up and her hair was changing as it became wild and somewhat creepy looking.

And the four statues in the temple were glowing and sending off rather unnerving energy.

Then the girl's eyes opened up, and they were glowing pink. Just as the eyes of the statues were glowing.

"Um...Yu girl? Earth to Yu girl?" Sora was starting to find this a bit creepy.

"My turn," The girl said in a tone of voice that was burning with rage, yet plainer than usual. "Draw!"

Sora noted the card she drew was covered in musical notes and glowing. That probably was not a good thing.

"I activate the spell card, Pendulum Solo," the girl stated in that same tone. "When the only cards I control are two Pendulum Monsters set to their scales, I can excavate from my deck until I draw two Melodious Monsters whose level can be pendulum summoned. When I do so, they will be immediately used to perform an Xyz Summon. Any other card will be sent to the graveyard."

The deck glowed. Sora scowled. Was this what the Professor meant about creating cards and rearranging fate?

"Draw!" she shouted in anger as she drew an Aria. "A level 4 monster. Well, that means that only level 4 monsters will be used. Very well, draw!"

"Spell Card: Rank-Up Magic: Supreme Force. As it is a magic card, it goes to the graveyard." Sora felt a bit of a relief that at least that card

was gone.

Rank-Up cards were brutal.

"Spell Card: Polymerization. Once again, I send this card to the graveyard."

"Monster card: Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon. As it is not a Melodious Monster, I send this card to the graveyard."

For some reason, Sora felt that the lack of emotion the girl showed on that move was rather unsettling.

"Spell Card: Dimensional Cross. I send this card to the graveyard, where its effect activates," she noted. "By banishing it, I can return three monsters that were banished to my graveyard. I return Schuberta, Elegy, and Sonata."

Sora wasn't sure what good that would do.

"Monster Card: Canon the Melodious Diva. As a Level 4 monster, I can now perform an Xyz summon!"

On her field, the two Fairies had appeared, and now shot into the air into an Xyz vortex.

"From the ever-binding energy of Yu, may an ancient force be once again unleashed upon the foolish oppression!" the possessed girl stated in a tone that was starting to make Sora want to run away. Her grin reminded him of Yuri.

Shivers.

"Bring forth the Perish Song, become the light that shines upon all! Xyz Summon! Rank 4, Number 39: Melodious Arch-Muse Conductor!"

A note-covered cocoon descended from the vortex, the likes of which Sora had never heard of before.

"What...what sort of monster did you summon!" Sora demanded as the cocoon began to unfurl, revealing an armored Melodious fairy decorated in yellow and white, with red streaks covering it. A stylized 39 was present on both of its wings, and on its arms seemed to be replicas of the bracelet the girl had on her hand (2500, 2000).

The girl didn't answer, as one of the Xyz monster's overlay units entered one of its bracelets, causing a beam of light to shoot out of both of his monsters and into the Arch-Muse.

"By removing an overlay unit, this card can target your special summoned monsters, drain half their attack power, and add it to itself," the girl finally responded. (3100, 2000), (1550, 2000), (1300, 2000), (650, 2000), (2500, 2000), (4700, 2000).

"Now, battle." The Arch-Muse flapped glowing wings, releasing what could only be described as a musical hurricane at the Chimera. "Orchestration Hurricane!"

Sora waved his hand as Fusion Ultimatum reappeared. "By banishing this card from my graveyard, I can negate one attack on a Fusion Monster and negate the effects of all monsters in play that aren't Fusion Monsters!"

A barrier formed, blocking the storm from connecting, with energy waves coming off it that affected all other cards in play. Sora really hoped that would stop the girl and let him take his next turn as the attack changes were negated.

"From my graveyard, I activate Rank-Up-Magic: Supreme Force!"

As a similar ghost card appeared on her field, Sora felt immense dread.

"I can activate this card from the graveyard," the girl noted. The spell card depicted black, spiky armor as a sort of symbol of Supreme Power. "when a fusion monster is also in the graveyard. I can perform an Xyz Change of an Xyz monster I control!"

Furling back up into a cocoon with a single overlay unit, Melodious Arch-Muse Conductor began to glow brightly as it started to change shapes and colors.

"Across all space marked by Yu, the writer of the victory song is all! Transform from a ball of glorious light and bring forth victory in this fight! Rank-Up Xyz Change! Descend! Rank 5! Number 39: Melodious Composer Mnemosyne!"

The armor was now larger and embodied with ancient Greek letters. The color was now gold and silver, and its bands of color scarlet. The ultimate angel of songs had descended (3000, 2500).

"When this card is summoned, all special summoned monsters controlled by my opponent lose all their attack power." the possessed Yu girl informed the startled Sora as the Xyz monster pointed its arms at Chimera and seemed to extract a song out of it. It looked rather painful. Then it did the same with Mozarta.

(0,0) (0,0).

"Now, attack Chimera with Musical Retribution!"

Holding its arms up, a bolt of electrified notes flew down from the top of the temple and struck Chimera, shattering it and, with it, Sora.

Sora's last thought was 'What the hell is she!'

Yuto had been time traveling.

It was the only explanation for how he, after his defeat by the pawn of Fusion, had ended up back on that day he had met Yuzu and defeated the Monarch-using punk.

In other times, he traveled back to various other points: his duel against Sora and Yuya, when he met up again with Shun, and during Shun's duel with Sora.

Oddly enough, he had noticed that sometimes things changed. As if others were also time traveling and influencing things.

His observations seemed to suggest that the ones responsible for this were Yuya, and/or someone in LDS's high command, though that started later.

While the LDS person was not an option, he had decided to speak with Yuya the next chance he could to verify his thoughts, assuming that Yuzu's bracelet wasn't around to make things difficult. They could talk while fused, but that wasn't... consistent yet. Half a minute at most and that required a strong emotional focus.

However, then he had been sent all the way back to the Xyz dimension, just as the invasion began.

A chance to fix things wasn't something he'd pass up. So, he fought.

Academia would not win this time, and they didn't seem to be doing nearly as well this time around.

However, there was another problem.

"Let the number take hold."

The voice in his head was rather annoying.

For some reason, a glowing 17 had appeared on his arm like a tattoo, and it seemed to be trying to get him to play a card that he did not remember having.

He somehow doubted that playing this card, a so called 'Number 17: The Phantom Knights of Shatter Axe,' would make the voice go away.

He might end up like Shun...

"Number 32: Raid Raptors-Veiss Osprey, destroy the Phantom Knights of Break Sword!"

A black Raid Raptor, marked by a large 32 on one of its wings and looking somewhat sinister, flew right at his Rank 3 Xyz monster of choice (100, 1500) vs. (2000, 1000), with three overlay units flying around it versus his monster's two.

Shun, who had ordered this attack, had a 32 glowing on his neck and a purple aura surrounding him, and a maniacal look on his face that was normally reserved for when facing the worst of Academia. "Your number is mine! I activate the effect of Veiss Osprey, detaching an overlay unit to destroy the monster it targeted for an attack, and inflict its attack power as damage!"

As the overlay unit was absorbed, Yuto recalled that he had only 1700 life points left (to Shun's 2500).

"I activate Emergency Provisions!" Yuto declared as the spell card appeared before him. "I tribute all three of my face down cards to gain 3000 life points."

As he sent all three of his Shadow Veils to the grave, his life points shot up to 4700, before the Raid Raptor's sonic attack struck and shattered Break Sword, and with that 2000 of his life points.

Frowning, Yuto waved his hand over the destroyed form of his monster. "When Break Sword is removed from the field, its overlay units are reborn as level 4 monsters!"

From the darkness rose back his two monsters: the large gloved The Phantom Knights of Rugged Glove, and the swift The Phantom Knights of Silent Boots (200, 1200).

Shun ended his turn. The fact he hadn't been playing his usual back-row this duel suggested that this 'number' was messing with his regular strategies.

Yuto considered that a good thing, and so he drew, noting the spell card he had drawn and trying not to be bothered that much that it was unusual for his deck.

"I activate the quick-play spell card, Forbidden Chalice! I target your monster, negating its effect and increasing its attack power by 400!"

Possessed Shun raised a sharp eyebrow as a strange energy shimmered around his Raptor (500, 1500).

"I overlay my level 4 Rugged Glove and Silent Boots!"

Both dark monsters flew into the air and into the overlay network.

'This is the only way to snap you out of this, Shun,' Yuto mentally told himself. "Formed from pitch-black darkness, to fight those foolish enough to oppose it with its treacherous fangs! Descend now! Xyz Summon! Rank 4, Dark Rebellion Xyz Dragon!"

And so, once again his mighty dragon had appeared to take back the duel for him (2500, 2000).

"When I use Rugged Glove as Xyz material, my monster gains 1000 attack points until the end of this turn," Yuto reminded Shun as his dragon roared (3500, 2000).

He didn't need to overkill, and so he pointed right at the Number Raptor. "Dark Rebellion Xyz Dragon, destroy that number and end this duel, Rebellious Lightning Disobey!"

With lightning sparking all over its body, Dark Rebellion slammed right into the Raptor, destroying it and sending Shun crashing to the ground defeated. (2500-0), the odd card and its number flying off Shun's disk and vanishing from his face.

Other than the bruising and staining of Shun and his favorite jacket, he seemed to be in decent health for someone who had lost a duel.

Though considering the Number that had been controlling Shun just landed on his foot (**LET THE NUMBER TAKE HOLD**), perhaps the same might yet not be the case for himself.

Let the Number Take Hold

Let the Number Take Hold

LET THE NUMBER TAKE HOLD

It was getting rather hard to ignore. He really didn't like going into crazed states of aggression, and he'd prefer that this would stop sooner rather than later.

LET THE NUMBER TAKE HOL ...

The voices suddenly stopped as the card at his foot shimmered, briefly pixilated, then was normal once more. Yuto had the oddest feeling a similar, if unseen, issue occurred with Number 17.

Shun than began to get back up, as Yuto felt a smile form on his face. Rather rare, truth be told.

"Shun, you're alright! Sorry about..."

"People told me that a fifth branch of this would be peaceful and relaxing." Yuto stopped talking when Shun spoke with a voice that was clearly not Shun, but more or less that of a batty professor in what was clearly a bad mood. "Hachimen has twelve, and he loves his job, they said. This new loop would be nothing but sunshine, pendulums, and hippos, I thought, and they agreed with me. But then, it had to get complicated." The person using Shun's body gave him a long look. "Why couldn't you have just been Yuya's son from the future, or a clone, or just Yuzu's brother? It would have been far less complicated for me!"

Yuto activated his duel disk threateningly towards the false Shun. "Who are you, and what are you doing possessing my friend!?"

Not-Shun waved his hand, and Yuto's duel disk vanished, leaving nothing behind but the two numbers and Dark Rebellion fluttering to the ground.

"I suppose you did catch me mid-rant. Perhaps I was simply going over your head. Very well, I probably should introduce myself." Not-Shun snapped his fingers, and a see-through Ibis head formed over Shun's. "I am Thoth, administrator to the currently five branches of reality that are known for their use of the Duel Monsters card game."

Yuto's eyebrows shot up. "Shun was right, there is a Ritual Dimension!"

Thoth shook his borrowed head. "Standard, Fusion, Synchro, and Xyz are all one branch. If there is a Ritual, or Pendulum, or Union, or Spirit Dimension out there, I have about as good of an idea as you do. Perhaps there might exist a Sharp Claw Trap Dragon or Burning Emotion Ritual Dragon, but that is merely guess work at the current time. For one thing, we need to deal with the issues currently afoot."

"Like possessing my friend?!"

Thoth nodded. "I normally would not resort to possession or channeling. That is more or less a trademark of Poseidon's. However, as you might have noticed, this loop hasn't started up right."

Picking up his Dragon along with the two numbers, Yuto had a pretty good idea what the bird meant.

Thoth noted his cards with interest. "Oh, the Numbers. That's not it actually. Variant numbers are actually quite safe. They are, however, connected to the problem. For you see, this loop is suffering from an over-complication of a noticeable but unspoken rule of your universe and the linked timelines."

Yuto gave him a confused look.

"The ability of duelists with central importance to the telling of this world's story, the ones who generally have the spiky multi-colored hair and Yu in their name, to draw the exact card they need at the

exact moment they need it, at times even making it out of thin air, has gone cancerous in this current iteration of time and space."

Yuto still was confused, though he was starting to sort of understand what Thoth meant.

Thoth sighed. "That. Tendency. Of. People. Like. You. And. Yuya. To. Draw. The. Card. You. Need. Generally. With Sparkles. And. Rainbows. It. Is. Broken."

Yuto felt annoyance at the tone that Thoth was speaking in now: the same type of tone an arrogant teacher might use to a troubled student. But it was probably the only way he would actually understand what this bird was babbling about.

Seeing that Yuto understood, Thoth continued. "You see, the universes trapped in temporal loops will occasionally have alternate versions of a world form. Sometimes a person might use a different deck. Other times one may find themselves a different gender. In this particular case, however, the concept of duelists, particularly those with Yu in their name, to manifest the way they can win has been heavily complicated and corrupted by this variant loop, and Yuzu's currently stuck in a state of hyper aggression and ominous wording, attacking Fusion Duelists left and right like a woman possessed, which she sort of is. I haven't found the official name for it yet, but some of my underlings called it Berserk Mode. Rather catchy, don't you think?"

Yuto felt a horrified feeling when he quickly grasped exactly what Thoth was talking about.

"Now, I can end this loop before this cancerous over-complication of an odd little universal quirk does anything too permanent, like causing ascension in a highly skilled duelist whom this variant sees as a strong channeler of 'Yu', to some extent or another, which is a rather unpleasant event you don't want to see, my eggplant haired anchor. However, to do so we need to snap Yuzu out of her Berserk Mode, or it might be permanent."

Yuto looked uneasy. "When you say permanent, do you mean she'll be at risk of doing it in a normal 'loop', or stuck in it 24/7?"

"Yes." Thoth didn't give him a straight answer. "I would suggest you administer the cure in the general, all purpose method."

"You want me to use a needle?"

"No, dueling." Thoth stated that as if was obvious. "I'll be in touch for tech support, but I'm afraid I cannot rig duels. You have to defeat her with your own power, without falling into Berserk Mode yourself. Good luck!" And with that, Shun slumped to the ground unconscious and now probably Thoth-free.

Yuto hid his unconscious body before going on his way to find Yuzu.

It did not take long to find Yuzu.

Yuto cringed from a distance as he noticed her eyes glowing in a horrific rage as dozens of Academia soldiers lay at her feet, though more from the fact Yuzu was looking like a homicidal agent of destruction than the Fusion users' agony.

Yuzu had Yuya's dragon on the field and the two Pendulum Magicians, while the last standing Academia member had a face down card and the dark puppet El Shadoll Winda (2200, 800).

"I attack with Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!" Yuzu said in a voice underlain with dark and hateful tones. "Spiral Strike Burst!"

With a roar, Odd-Eyes let loose a burst of dark flames towards Winda.

"I activate my trap card, Magic Cylinder!" The Academia member tried to protect himself as a pair of matching cylinders appeared alongside his puppet. "This reflects your attack right back at your life points!"

"Timegazer Magician's Pendulum Effect activates," Yuzu countered. "When a Pendulum monster attacks, I can negate the activation of your trap card. Inverse Gears!"

The cylinders seemed to rewind out of existence as the flames struck and shattered the doll.

"When Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon battles with a monster whose level is at least 5, the damage you take in response is doubled," Yuzu darkly told her victim as his eyes panicked further. "Reaction Force!"

The flames struck the Academia soldier head on as he collapsed to the ground in defeat (500-0).

"Now, to darkness with all of you."

Yuto's eyes went wide as the Academia soldiers faded away.

Not into cards, but into seemingly the shadows themselves.

Yuzu, her eyes glowing a solid pink and her hair on crazed end, merely watched them fade away while idly returning her cards to her deck and deactivating her duel disk, before turning sharply to gaze at him.

Gray eyes met berserk pink, and Yuzu activated her disk once again.

Normally Yuto would try and calm her down: but if what Thoth said was true, that would not work. Only dueling would, and so Yuto entered the stance, only for Yuto to notice that he was missing something.

"My duel disk..." Yuto muttered, having forgotten that Thoth had made it disappear, before something shimmered into existence on his arm.

A duel disk yes, but instead of being his... it was the red duel disk Yuya used.

"This isn't my..."

"I activate Solo: First Movement!"

Yuzu apparently was not going to let him request his actual deck.

Yuto couldn't help but stare at his hand in some unease.

While Yuzu had special summoned Aria in defense mode (1600, 1200), and called it a turn, he had to make his. However, while he had a deck, it was not his deck.

For just as he was using Yuya's duel disk, he was also using Yuya's deck.

His hand was not filled with a multitude of spell and trap cards to support Phantom Knights, nor Phantom Knights themselves.

Instead, his hand was filled with cartoony animals, many marked with the scales of Pendulum Monsters.

A mechanic Yuto had little to no practice in. Sure he'd seen it, having sat and observed a few of Yuya's duels in past time loops (as Thoth called them), but he had not practiced with them.

But it was the only way to save Yuzu, and if he had to use something he barely understood, then so be it.

It wouldn't be that different from the early fights with Academia after all.

"Draw!" Yuto drew Hippo Carnival... An odder spell card he had never seen.

Still, it was one of the few defensive cards that Yuya carried in his deck (due to Action Cards making trap cards like Negate Attack somewhat redundant, foolishly in Yuto's humble opinion), and he would benefit from it.

"I set one card." He set the only spell card he had on him at the moment, noting the five monster cards he had drawn for his first move. "Now, with the scale 2 Performapal Drumming Kong, and the scale 6 Performapal Lizardraw, I set the Pendulum Scales!"

Possibly mucking up the opening chant, Yuto noted that a drum-formed ape and a card-decked lizard floated up alongside him, taking a stance with the numbers 2 and 6 glowing next to them. Berserk Yuzu didn't seem fazed.

Then again, when did anyone under that curse ever seem phased?

"With this, I can special summon cards with levels from 3 to 5," Yuto declared. "Now, to me my monsters!"

With three bursts of light, monsters appeared on the field.

"Behold, my level 3 Performapal Thunderhinos!" The stone rhinos landed on the ground with electrical sparks (200, 1800).

"And my level 5 Performapal Partnaga!" The yellow and red hand ended snake coiled up on the field (500, 2100).

"Turn end."

Yuto couldn't help but smirk as his turn ended.

Even if this was not his deck, there were ways he could play the deck like he personally preferred.

He liked a more defensive style to Yuya's more 'attack first' play style. Thankfully he had cards in his deck that could be used as Yuto preferred.

With a Rhino attack lock and a further attack block by Partnaga of any monster whose level was 5 or lower, Yuto felt pretty sure.

And if worse came to worse, he could be saved by scantily clad hippos.

"I draw." Yuzu's hand was once more at five cards. "I summon Opera the Melodious Diva."

As the second Melodious Monster appeared on the field (2300, 1000), Yuto felt as if his defenses could still hold.

"Now, as I control a Melodious Monster, I special summon Canon the Melodious Diva from my hand!" (1400, 2000).

As the third level 4 fairy type appeared, Yuto felt a bit nervous.

With just Opera and Aria, he could at least assume she wasn't going to Xyz summon while she still wanted to use Aria's effect.

But with three monsters now...

"I overlay my level 4 Opera the Melodious Diva and Canon the Melodious Diva!"

The two yellow lights shot into the vortex as a chant was initiated by Yuzu.

"Songs of the world, merge together into a warrior of rebellion! Xyz Summon! Be born, Rank 4! Starliege Paladynamo!" (2000, 1000).

The warrior of light's appearance was alarming, as Yuto recalled quite clearly from before the war that this card could...

"I activate Starliege Paladynamo's monster effect! By removing both overlay units, I can negate the effect of one monster you control. I target one of your Performapal Thunderhinos!"

The overlay units shooting into the monster's sword, the light struck into one of his rock beasts, causing it to lose color.

"Now, only one remains with that lock effect," Yuzu said in berserker tones. "Now, destroy the non-negated Thunderhino!"

Charging forward, Paladynamo sliced apart the still-powered rhino with an explosion as Yuto covered his eyes from the resulting debris.

With three cards in her hand, Yuzu set a card to end her turn with that as Yuto drew Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon.

"I tribute Performapal Partnaga and Thunderhino!" The two monsters vanished from the field. "to advance summon Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!"

The red dragon that was the symbol of the Standard Dimension (at least from Yuto's personal observations) roared onto the field, ready to strike (2500, 2000).

"Trap Card activate, Monopoly Crash!"

A trap card Yuto had never seen before, displaying the fusion summoning of a Ancient Gear Hound Fusion monster causing two others to self destruct, rose up.

'Curious.' A voice that was clearly Thoth's rang out in his mind. 'That card is rather odd looking from my perspective...it must have been created by Berserk Yuzu's abuse of the card creation trick.'

"When this card activates," Yuzu spoke, "if a Fusion, Synchro, Xyz, Ritual, or Pendulum Monster is summoned, all other cards of that type face up on the field are destroyed except the summoned monsters. That includes ones Pendulum Zones!"

Yuto's gorilla and lizard shattered.

Well, there went his plan on calling back Partnaga...but never mind that.

Pointing directly at her Xyz monster, Yuto called out, "Odd-Eyes, attack Starliege Paladynamo with Spiral Strike Burst!"

The flames flew out of Odd-Eyes's mouth and straight into the Xyz monster, shattering it as Yuzu didn't even seemed phased by the

resulting damage (4000-3500).

"Turn end." Yuto ended his turn as Yuzu once more had three cards in hand.

"I activate the spell card Polymerization."

Yuto cringed as the spiraling vortex formed behind Yuzu.

"I fuse two Mozarta the Melodious Maestras together! Dual Genius! With the guidance of the baton, gather your power! Fusion Summon! Now come here to the stage! Sing the song of victory, Bloom Diva the Melodious Muse!"

As the flower fairy descended to the field, Yuto knew this was not going to be easy (1000, 2000).

A monster that could not be destroyed by battle or card effects, who could destroy you with effect damage.

Did Yuya even have a card to stop such a monster?!

Aria changed to attack mode as he tried to figure that question out.

"Battle," Yuzu declared darkly as she pointed her near unstoppable, quite possibly really unstoppable, monster at Odd-Eyes. "Attack Odd-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!"

As the fairy flew right at Odd-Eyes, Yuto countered with his face down card.

"I counter with Hippo Carnival!"

As three scantily dressed hippopotami appeared in front of Odd-Eyes, Yuto was slightly glad Shun was not here to see him play such a card.

However, they still forced Bloom Diva to waste a turn on them, and not Odd-Eyes, and while he was now down a green hippo, he still

had three monsters left to defend himself.

Two anyway, after Aria destroyed his yellow hippo.

Yuzu ended her turn with a vacant hand facing down a Dragon and a Hippo.

Placing his hand on top of Yuya's deck, Yuto tried desperately to think of any card that could help him out.

Perhaps that trap card that he used against that Yosenju duelist, Nameless. No...

Yuto didn't notice his hand sparkle a bit like Obsidian as he began his turn.

"Draw!" Yuto drew...and saw a card that he had never seen before from him or Yuya.

'It would appear you just tapped into that 'create the card you need' thing that mutated into a strange metastory Yu element I mentioned earlier,' Thoth noted. "I might suggest not doing that too much... You might end up like Yuzu over there.'

Yuto noted the card however, and felt he should risk it. "I activate Pendulum Presentation!"

The spell card depicting the Pendulum Performapals Fire Muffleo, Silver Claw, and Partnaga bursting out of a box appeared on the field as the entire battlefield became dark.

"With this spell card, all other cards currently on the field have their effects negated until the end of the turn," Yuto stated. "Now, I draw from my deck until I draw a Performapal Pendulum Monster, then I set it in the Pendulum Zone, where its effect must be activated if able. Now, I draw!" He drew Performapal Trump Witch, before looking ill.

Really? Of all possible cards, it was that one?

As the scale four witch appeared in his Pendulum Zone, he felt a great revolting feeling in his stomach, but the rules were the rules.

"Now, battle! Odd-Eyes attacks Bloom Diva!"

While its effect would not help him this battle, Odd-Eyes could still benefit from the fact that Bloom Diva's effect was gone, and thus slammed into Diva head on, sending a massive shock wave into Yuzu (3500-2000).

"Now, I use the effect of Trump Witch…" He said this as if he was reluctantly playing a card that would cost him his soul. "To fusion summon Odd-Eyes and the Hippo Token."

As the fusion began, Yuto did not give it the proper speech as a form of protest. "I Fusion summon Beast-Eyes Pendulum Dragon!"

The brown, hairy dragon roared onto the field ready for battle (3000, 2000), as Yuto pointed at Aria. "Now, attack and destroy Aria! Hell-Dive Burst!"

As fire was sent right at Aria, the fairy looked alarmed as the attack crashed into it with brutal force, still not phasing Yuzu (2000-600).

"Turn end," Yuto declared as Yuzu drew, and smirked at the one card she had.

"I activate Rank-Up Magic: Yu Force!"

'Oh, dear.' Thoth didn't need to elaborate as a spell card featuring Yuya's pendent glowing appeared.

"With this spell card, I can special summon an Xyz monster directly from my extra deck, and immediately rank it up to a higher level as long as the card shares the same type and attribute," Yuzu replied coldly as an armored fairy appeared on the field briefly, before being sucked into an overlay network.

"Across all space marked by Yu, the writer of the victory song is all! Transform from a ball of glorious light and bring forth victory in this fight! Rank-Up Xyz Change! Descend! Rank 5! Number 39: Melodious Composer Mnemosyne!"

Descending from the sky was a gold, silver, and scarlet armored Fairy-Type monster. (3000, 2500)

A Number.

Wonderful.

"When Melodious Composer Mnemosyne is summoned, I can negate the attack power and effects of all other special summoned monsters!" Yuzu declared as the armored fairy pointed its arms at Beast Eyes and made a pulling notion. What followed was a pained cry as a song was extracted from Beast Eyes, leaving it pale and weak (0,0).

"Now, battle. Destroy Beast Eyes! Musical Retribution!"

As electrified notes slammed down from the heavens onto Beast Eyes, Yuto felt a searing pain as he felt the full force of the damage (4000-1000).

Dropping to one knee in pain, Yuto watched Yuzu end her turn as he drew Performapal Call.

"I set one card and end my turn," Yuto declared as Yuzu drew from her deck.

"I attack directly with Mnemosyne, Musical Retribution!"

As lightning sparked from above, Yuto activated his trap card.

"Go, Performapal Call!" A barrier blocked the electrified sound track. "With this card, I can negate a direct attack and add two Performapal Monsters to my hand!" In his case, the two he would need to win.

'You know that card blocks extra deck summonings, right?' Thoth pointed out as Yuto took a closer look at the card.

"It doesn't say on this card..."

Thoth muttered something about glitched up card rulings.

Yuzu ended her turn, but not before she turned sharply to a higher level of the ruins. Following her gaze, Yuto felt a sense of dread, and fury, as he saw a trio of Obelisk Force members looking down at them.

"Well, look, it's a bunch of Xyz trash," one member noted.

"Quite, I do say they must be having a heated argument," the second commented.

"You know, I say we should intervene," the third finished for them as he activated his duel disk. "Now, for Fusion!"

"For Fusion..." the others stated, before a white motorcycle slammed into them in a burst of green light.

"No, not for Yugo!" a loud voice shouted from up there as Yuto stared, before shaking his head.

Maybe it was just some strange variant loop where the pawn was not evil? It was possible...

Yuto missed the part where Yugo yelled about hating Academia for putting him in some strange time loop while he drew his card, before smirking.

'Huh, I could have sworn that card had a different effect. Must be like the Melodious Monsters,' Thoth noted as Yuto held the winning combo up.

"Now, I normal summon Performapal Friendonkey!"

The bluish mule appeared on the field in a burst of confetti. (1600, 600)

"When I normal summon Friendonkey, I can special summon a Performapal Monster from my hand or graveyard. I special summon Performapal Stamp Turtle!"

A green turtle fell out of the pouch on Friendonkey's saddle and spun around a bit on its shell before getting back upright (100, 1800). "Once per turn, I can increase the levels of up to two monsters on the field by one when I control Stamp Turtle. I increase the level of Friendonkey by one!"

The Turtle held its stamp in the air as the donkey brayed powerfully (LEVEL 4).

"Now, I overlay my level 4 Friendonkey and Stamp Turtle!"

A brown and blue light shot into the air as Yuto reached into his pocket and held up the card he was going to win with.

If he had to use Yuya's cards, he at least wanted to win with his own.

"Formed from pitch-black darkness, to fight those foolish enough to oppose it with its treacherous fangs! Descend now! Xyz Summon! Appear now! Rank 4, Dark Rebellion Xyz Dragon!"

Yuto couldn't help but smirk as his ace monster appeared alongside him (2500, 2000).

Pointing at the number, Yuto noticed his dragon absorb an overlay unit. "I activate Dark Rebellion Xyz Dragon's monster effect. By removing an overlay unit, I can drain your monster of half its attack power and add it to Dark Rebellion. Treason, Discharge!"

As the purple lightning surrounded Mnemosyne, Dark Rebellion roared with its new power (3000-1500, 2500), (2500-4000, 2000).

"Battle." Yuto did not need to go any further with the effect this turn. "Attack Number 39, Rebellious Lightning Disobey!"

With a familiar burst of lightning, Dark Rebellion slammed into Yuzu's number.

Yuzu finally let out a somewhat familiar scream as Berserk Mode lost its grip on her (600-0).

'Excellent! Now, to end this loop before one of you does something else stupid,' Thoth declared. 'But first...let's try and save some progress at least. Maybe I can even de-bug a few of them while I'm at it.'

Save?

It would be hard for Yuto to explain what happened after that 'save' question had come to him.

However, he once again found himself in Miami City.

The happy laughter of children and the bustle of a thriving metropolis rang out from the cafe table Yuto found himself sitting at, his mask off as he noted what Thoth had meant.

Two decks lay before him: one with Dark Rebellion on the bottom, the other with Odd-Eyes.

Interesting... Now, how did someone hold decks between loops?

Meanwhile

Yuzu woke up in her bed with a pounding headache, and a deck topped with an Xyz monster she had never seen before now on her side table.

Number 39?

Also Meanwhile

CRASH

"Hey!" a short and irritable little bald man complained as a white motorbike slammed into one of his campaign signs from out of nowhere. "How dare you crash into the property of the future Mayor, You Fool!"

The rider glared at him in annoyance. "My name is Yugo, YU! GO! Why can't anyone get my name right, no matter how many times time repeats!"

"The only thing that is repeating here, you hooligan, is the jail time you are going to suffer when I am elected!"

EPILOGUE

Kurosaki Shun was aware of a few things after he had activated "Crossover":

1. He was currently buck naked in a rather poorly cared-for trailer.

2. His memories were horribly jumbled, giving him incredible knowledge of how to combat "demons" while insisting that he had never even heard of Duel Monsters.

3. Someone was rather forcefully knocking on his, no, the door.

Kurosaki Shun was an impatient boy, especially since his home had been destroyed. But a desire for answers dictated that he should at least try to find out where he was. After putting on some comparatively clean pants, Shun went to answer the knocking.

"Oh. That explains a bit," said a female voice.

Outside of the trailer, two people, a young woman and a white-haired man who seemed to be in his twenties, were waiting. The white-haired man stepped forward.

"Hello, there. I hope you're feeling Awake."

"Your knocking woke me up, though how I got to this trailer is another question entirely," Shun responded.

The two visitors looked at each other before the woman spoke. "Are you feeling okay? Have you been feeling a sense of déjà vu as of late? Or do your memories not make much sense?"

Shun's eyes widened. "Do you two know why I'm here?"

The man said, "We'll be glad to explain, though you might want to get your sword first."

Shun was confused, both at the man's response and how he knew that Shun even had a sword, something he himself hadn't known until just then. "Why?"

"Because of that." The two visitors then pointed out past the harbor, where a strange bulge was forming as the sky darkened.

Arc-V rules:

Cut off point is just after activating Cross Over for Yuya and Co, the morning after escaping security for Yugo and Yuzu/Zuzu. However due to the amount of time it's taken to write this, the loops after this will be assuming that the new baseline ends after the end of the first round of the Friendship Cup.

Starting loopers are Yuya and Yuto (Soulbound co-anchors, similar set up to Astral and Yuya), with Yugo, Yuzu/Zuzu and Shun active as of these loops. Flagged for early awakening are Gongenzaka/Gong, Reiji/Declan, and Serena. As for Sora... baseline expansion required.

Incidentally, What's in a Name had some last minute alterations. Small ones, stats or info that wasn't there when it was first written, nothing that changes it over all.